

CHILD'S LIFE OF CHRIST



OR THE

WONDERFUL
LIFE

HESSA STRETTON

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CHRIST BLESSING LITTLE CHILDREN.

"SUFFER LITTLE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME, AND FORBID THEM NOT."—MARK 10 : 14.



BIRTH OF CHRIST.

"AND THEY CAME WITH HASTE, AND FOUND MARY AND JOSEPH, AND THE BABE LYING IN A MANGER."—LUKE 2:16.

THE
CHILD'S LIFE OF CHRIST;

OR,

The Wonderful Life.

BY

HESBA STRETTON,

Author of "Jessica's First Prayer," "Lost Gipsy," "The King's Servants," etc.

PROFUSELY ILLUSTRATED.

"His Name shall be called Wonderful."

ISAIAH IX. 6.



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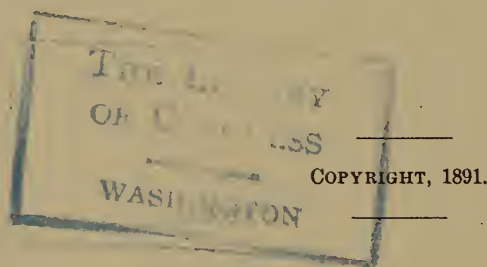
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ILLUSTRATIONS BY
PLOCKHORST AND HOFMANN.

The sixteen half tone pictures in this book are from the designs by HEINRICH JOHANN MICHAEL FERDINAND HOFMANN, who is one of the oldest and best known Biblical artists now living. He was born in 1824, and after traveling and studying in Holland, Belgium, Germany, France and Italy, he took up his residence in Dresden, where he is now a Professor in the Academy. His greatest work is his "Christ Among the Doctors." This was purchased by the Imperial Government a few years since for the famous Dresden Gallery of Fine Arts. It is conceded to be the most popular modern Biblical picture now in existence.

Thirteen of the fine line wood engravings are designed by another famous German artist of the modern school—Plockhorst.

These two complete sets of illustrations are universally admitted to include the best and most instructive religious art works ever designed for the New Testament. They may be said to show what genius in art can accomplish.



PREFACE.



THE following slight and brief sketch is merely the *story* of the life and death of our Lord. It has been written for those who have not the leisure, or the books, needed for threading together the fragmentary and scattered incidents recorded in the Four Gospels. Of late years these records have been searched diligently for the smallest links, which might serve to complete the chain of those years passed amongst us by One who called himself the Son of man, and did not refuse to be called the Son of God. This little book is intended only to present the result of these close investigations, made by many learned men, in a plain, continuous narrative, suitable for unlearned readers. There is nothing new in it. It would be difficult to write anything new of that Life, which has been studied and sifted for nearly nineteen hundred years.

The great mystery that surrounds Christ is left untouched. Neither love nor thought of ours can reach the heart of it, whilst still we see him as through a glass darkly. When we behold him as he is, face to face, then, and only then, shall we know fully what he was, and what he did for us. Whilst we strain our eyes to catch the mysterious vision, but dimly visible, we are in danger of becoming blind to that human, simple, homely life, spent amongst us as the pattern of our days. "If any man think that he knoweth anything, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known of him." Happy they who are content with being known of God.

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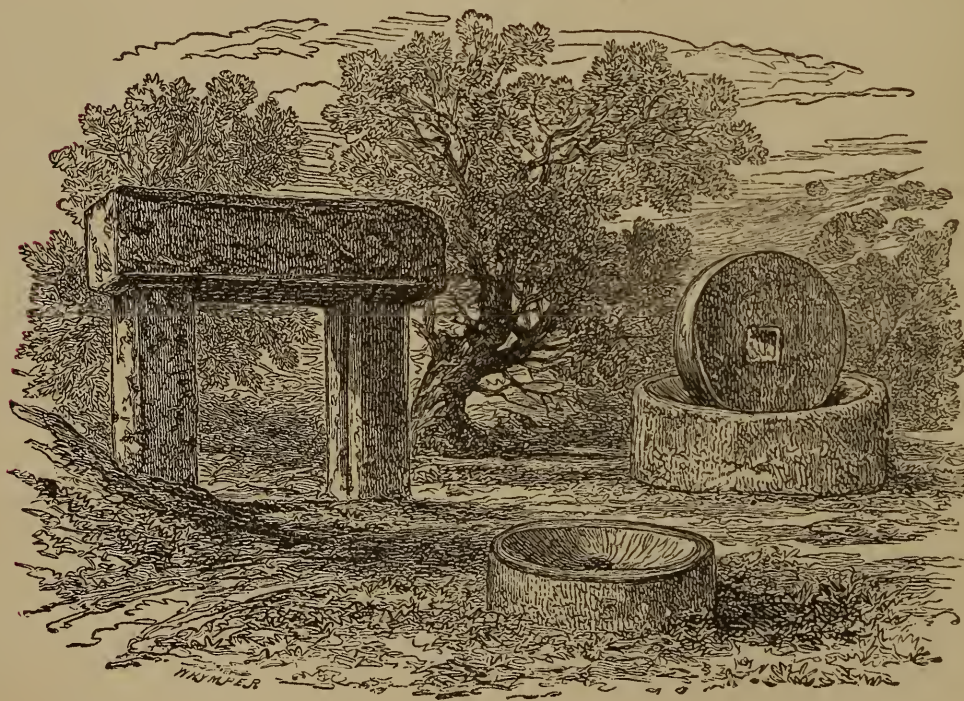
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THE WONDERFUL LIFE.

BOOK I.

THE CARPENTER.

CHAPTER I.

The Holy Land.



ERY far away from our own country lies the land where Jesus Christ was born. More than five thousand miles stretch between us and it, and those who wish to visit it must journey over sea and land to reach its shores. It rests in the very heart and centre of the Old World, with Asia, Europe, and Africa encircling it. A little land it is, only about two hundred miles in length, and but fifty miles broad from the Great sea, or the Mediterranean, on the west, to the river Jordan, on the east. But its hills and valleys, its dusty roads, and green pastures, its vineyards and oliveyards, and its village-streets have been trodden by the feet of our Lord; and for us, as well as for the Jews, to whom God gave it, it is the Holy Land.

The country lies high, and forms a table-land, on which there are mountains of considerable height. Moses describes it as "a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills, a land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig-trees, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive, and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness. A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year, even unto the end of the year." The sky is cloudless, except in the end of autumn and in winter, and no moisture collects but in the form of dew. In former times vineyards and orchards climbed up the slopes of every hill, and the

plains were covered with wheat and barley. It was densely peopled, far more so than our own country is now, and over all the land villages and towns were built, with farm-houses scattered between them. Herds of sheep and goats were pastured in the valleys, and on the barren mountains, where the vines and olives could not grow.

There are two lakes in Palestine, one in the northwest, the other southwest, with the river Jordan flowing between them, through a deep valley, sixty miles long. The southern lake is the Dead sea, or Sea of Death. No living creature can exist in its salt waters. The palm-trees carried down by the floods of Jordan are cast up again by the waves on the marshy shore, and lie strewn about it, bare and bleached, and crusted over with salt. Naked rocks close in the sea, with no verdure upon them; rarely is a bird seen to fly across it, whilst at the southern end, where there is a mountain, and pillars of rock-salt, white as snow, there always hangs a veil of mist, like smoke ascending up forever and ever into the blue sky above. As the brown and rapid stream of Jordan flows into it on the north, the waters will not mingle, but the salt waves foam against the fresh, sweet current of the river, as if to oppose its effort to bring some life into its desolate and barren depths.

The northern lake is called the sea of Galilee. Like the Dead sea, it lies in a deep basin, surrounded by hills; but this depth gives to it so warm and fertilizing a climate, that the shores are covered with a thick jungle of shrubs, especially of the oleander, with its rose-colored blossoms. Grassy slopes here and there lead up to the feet of the mountains. The deep blue waters are sweet, clear, and transparent, and in some places the waves ebb and flow over beds of flowers, which have crept down to the very margin of the lake. Flocks of birds build among the jungle, and water-fowl skim across the surface of the lake in myriads, for the water teems with fish. All the early hours of the morning the lark sings there merrily, and throughout the live-long day the moaning of the dove is heard. In former times, when the shores of the lake were crowded with villages, hundreds of boats and little ships with white sails sailed upon it, and all sorts of fruit and corn were cultivated on the western plain.

The Holy Land, in the time of our Lord, was divided into three provinces, almost into three countries, as distinct as England, Scotland, and Wales. In the south was Judæa, with the capital, Jerusalem, the Holy City, where the temple of the Jews was built, and where their king dwelt. The people of Judæa were more courtly and polished, and, perhaps, more

educated than the other Jews, for they lived nearer Jerusalem, where all the greatest and wisest men of the nation had their homes. Up in the north lay Galilee, inhabited by stronger and rougher men, whose work was harder and whose speech was harsher than their southern brethren, but whose spirit was more independent, and more ready to rebel against tyranny. Between those two districts, occupied by Jews, lay an unfriendly country, called Samaria, whose people were of a mixed race, descended from a colony of heathen who had been settled in the country seven hundred years before, and who had so largely intermarried with the Jews that they had often sought to become united with them as one nation. The Jews had steadily resisted this union, and now a feeling of bitter enmity existed between them, so that Galilee was shut off from Judæa by an alien country.

The great prosperity of the Jewish nation had passed away long before our Lord was born. An unpopular king, Herod, who did not belong to the royal house of David, was reigning; but he held his throne only upon sufferance from the great emperor of Rome, whose people had then subdued all the known world. As yet there were no Roman tax-gatherers in the land, but Herod paid tribute to Augustus, and this was raised by heavy taxes upon the people. All the country was full of murmuring, and discontent, and dread. But a secret hope was running deep down in every Jewish heart, helping them to bear their present burdens. The time was well-nigh fulfilled when, according to the prophets, a King of the house of David, greater than David in battle, and more glorious than Solomon in all his glory, should be born to the nation. Far away in Galilee, in the little villages among the hills, and the busy towns by the lake, and down in southern Judæa, in the beautiful capital, Jerusalem, and in the sacred cities of the priests, a whisper passed from one drooping spirit to another, "Patience! the kingdom of Messiah is at hand."

As the land of our Lord lies many hundreds of miles from us, so his life on this earth was passed hundreds of years ago. There are innumerable questions we long to ask, but there is no one to answer. Four little books, each one called a gospel, or the good tidings of Jesus Christ, are all we have to tell us of that most beautiful and most wondrous life. But whenever we name the date of the present year we are counting from the time when he was born. In reality, he was born three or four years earlier, and though the date is not exactly known, it is now most likely 1894, instead of 1891, years since Mary laid him, a new-born babe, in his lowly cradle of a manger in Bethlehem.

CHAPTER II.

Jerusalem and Bethlehem.

JERUSALEM was a city beautiful for situation, built on two ridges of rocky ground, with a deep valley between them. It was full of splendid palaces and towers, with aqueducts and bridges, and massive walls, the stones of which are still a marvel for their size. Upon the ridge of Mount Zion stood the marble palaces of the king, his noblemen, and the high-priest; on the opposite and lower hill rose the temple, built of snow-white marble, with cedar roofs, and parapets of gold, which, glistening in the bright sunshine and pure moonlight, could be seen from afar off in the clear, dry atmosphere of that eastern land. From ridge to ridge a magnificent viaduct was built, connecting the temple mount with Mount Zion and its streets of palaces.

Every Jew had a far more fervent and loyal affection for the temple than for the palace of the king. It was in fact the palace of their true King, Jehovah. Three times a year their law ordained a solemn feast to be held there, grander than the festivities of any earthly king. Troops of Jews came up to them from all parts of the country, even from northern Galilee, which was three or four days' journey distant, and from foreign lands, where emigrants had settled. It was a joyous crowd, and they were joyous times. Friends who had been long parted met once more together, and went up in glad companies to the house of their God. It has been reckoned that at the great feast, that of the Passover, nearly three millions of Jews thronged the streets and suburbs of the Holy City, most of whom had offerings and sacrifices to present in the temple; for nowhere else under the blue sky could any sacrifice be offered to the true God.

Even a beloved king held no place in the heart of the Jews beside their temple. But Herod, who was then reigning, was hateful to the people, though he had rebuilt the temple for them with extraordinary splendor. He was cruel, revengeful, and cowardly, terribly jealous, and suspicious of all about him, so far as to have put to death his own wife and three of his sons. The crowds who came to the feasts carried the story of his tyranny to the remotest corners of his kingdom. He even offended his patron, the emperor of Rome; and the emperor had written to him a very sharp letter, saying that he had hitherto treated him as a friend, but now he should deal with him as an enemy. Augustus ordered that a tax should be levied on

the Jews, as in other conquered countries, and required from Herod a return of all his subjects who would be liable to the tax.

This command of the Roman emperor threw the whole nation into disturbance. The return was allowed to be made by Herod, not by the Romans themselves, and he proceeded to do it in the usual Jewish fashion. The registers of the Jews were carefully kept in the cities of their families, but the people were scattered throughout the country. It was therefore necessary to order every man to go to the city of his own family, there to answer to the register of his name and age, and to give in an account of the property he possessed. Besides this, he was required to take an oath to Cæsar and the king; a bitter trial to the Jews, who boasted, years afterwards, under a Roman governor, "We are a free people, and were never in bondage to any man." There must have been so much natural discontent felt at this requirement that it is not likely the winter season would be chosen for carrying it out. The best, because the least busy time of the year, would be after the olives and grapes were gathered, and before the season for sowing the corn came, which was in November. The Feast of Tabernacles was held at the close of the vintage, and fell about the end of September or beginning of October. It was the most joyous of all the feasts, and as the great national Day of Atonement immediately preceded it, it was probably very largely attended by the nation; and perhaps the gladness of the season might in some measure tend to counteract the discontent of the people.

But whether at the Feast of the Tabernacles, or later in the year, the whole Jewish nation was astir, marching to and fro to the cities of their families. At this very time a singular event befell a company of shepherds, who were watching their flocks by night in the open plain stretching some miles eastward from Bethlehem, a small village about six miles from Jerusalem. Bethlehem was the city of the house of David, and all the descendants of that beloved king were assembled to answer to their names on the register, and to be enrolled as Roman subjects. The shepherds had not yet brought in their flocks for the winter, and they were watching them with more than usual care, it may be, because of the unsettled state of the country, and the gathering together of so many strangers, not for a religious, but for a political purpose, which would include the lowest classes of the people, as well as the law-loving and law-abiding Jews.

No doubt this threatened taxing and compulsory oath of subjection had intensified the desire of the nation for the coming of the Messiah. Every man desires to be delivered from degradation and taxes, if he cares nothing

about being saved from his sins. It was not safe to speak openly of the expected Messiah: but out on the wide plains, with the darkness shutting them in, the shepherds could while away the long chilly hours with talking of the events of the passing times, and of that promised king who, so their teachers said in secret, was soon, very soon to appear to crush their enemies.

But as the night wore on, when some of them were growing drowsy, and the talk had fallen into a few slow sentences spoken from time to time, a light, above the brightness of the sun, which had sunk below the horizon hours ago, shone all about them with a strange splendor. As soon as their dazzled eyes could bear the light, they saw within it a form as of an angel. Sore afraid they were as they caught sight of each other's faces in this terrible, unknown glory. But quickly the angel spoke to them, lest their terror should grow too great for them to hear aright.

"Fear not," he said, "for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, as the angel ended his message, the shepherds saw, standing with him in the glorious light, a great multitude of the blessed hosts that people heaven, who were singing a new song under the silent stars, which shone dimly in the far-off sky. Once before "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" because God had created a world. Now, at the birth of a child, in the little village close by, where many an angry Jew had lain down to a troubled sleep, they sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."

The sign given to the shepherds served as a guide to them. They were to find the new-born babe cradled in the manger, with no softer bed than the fodder of the cattle. Surely, the poorest mother in the humblest home in Bethlehem could provide better for her child. They must, then, seek the Messiah, just proclaimed to them, among the strangers who were sleeping in the village inn. All day long had parties of travellers been crossing the plain, and the shepherds would know very well that the little inn, which was built at the eastern part of the village, merely as a shelter for such chance passers-by, would be quite full. It was not a large building; for Bethlehem was too near to Jerusalem for many persons to tarry there for the night, instead of pressing forward to the Holy City. It was only on such an occasion as this that the inn was likely to be over-full.

But as the shepherds drew near the eastern gate, they probably saw the glimmering of a lamp near the inn. It is a very old tradition that our Lord was born in a cave; and this is quite probable. If the inn were built near to a cave, it would naturally be used by the travellers for storing away their food from the heavy night dews, although their mules and asses might stay out in the open air. A light in the cave would attract the shepherds to it, and there they found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. A plain working man, like themselves, his wife, and a helpless new-born child; how strangely this sight must have struck them, after the glory and mystery of the vision of angels they had just witnessed! How different was Mary's low, hushed voice as she pointed out the child born since the sun went down, from that chorus of glad song, when all the heavenly host sang praises to God.

A strange story they had to tell Mary of the vision they had just seen. She was feeling the first great gladness and joy of every mother over her child born into the world, but in Mary's case this joy was brightened beyond that of all other women, yet shadowed by the mystery of being the chosen mother of the Messiah. The shepherds' statement increased her gladness, and lifted her above the natural feeling of dishonor done to her child by the poor and lowly circumstances of his birth; whilst they, satisfied with the testimony of their own senses, having seen and heard for themselves, went away, and made known these singular and mysterious events. All who heard these things wondered at them; but as the shepherds were men of no account, and Joseph and Mary were poor strangers in the place, we may be sure there would be few to care about such a babe, in those days of vexation and tumult. Had the Messiah been born in a palace, and the vision of the heavenly host been witnessed by a company of the priests, the whole nation would have centred their hopes and expectations upon the child; and unless a whole series of miracles had been worked for his preservation the Roman conquerors would have destroyed both him and them. No miracle was wrought for the infant Christ, save that constant ministry of angels, sent forth to minister unto Him who was the Captain of salvation, even as they are sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.

CHAPTER III.

In the Temple.

JOSEPH and Mary did not remain in the cave longer than could be helped. As soon as the unusual crowd of strangers was gone, they found some other dwelling-place, though not in the inn, which was intended for no more than a shelter for passing travellers. They had forty days to wait before Mary could go up to the temple to offer her sacrifice after the birth of her child, when also Joseph would present him to the Lord, according to the ancient law that every first-born child, which was a son, belonged especially to God. Joseph could not afford to live in idleness for six weeks; and as he had known beforehand that they must be detained in Bethlehem so long, he probably had carried with him his carpenter's tools, and now set about looking for work. It is likely that both he and Mary thought it best to bring up Jesus in Bethlehem, where he was born; for they must have known the prophecy that out of Bethlehem should come the Messiah. It was near to Jerusalem, and from his earliest years the child would become familiar with the temple, and its services and priests. It was not far from the hill country, where Zacharias and Elizabeth were living, whose son, born in their old age, was still only an infant of six months, but whose future mission was to be the forerunner of the Messiah. For every reason it would seem best to return no more to Nazareth, the obscure village in Galilee, but to settle in Bethlehem itself.

At the end of forty days, Mary went up to Jerusalem to offer her sacrifice, and Joseph to present the child, and pay the ransom of five shekels for him, without which the priests might claim him as a servant to do the menial work of the temple. They must have passed by the tomb of Rachel, who so many centuries before had died in giving birth to her son; and Mary, whose heart pondered over such things, may have whispered to herself as she clasped her child closer to her, "In Rama was a voice heard; lamentation and weeping, and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." She did not know the full meaning of those words yet; but, amid her own wonderful happiness, she would sigh over Rachel's sorrow, little thinking that the prophecy linked it with the baby she was carrying in her arms.

At this time the temple was being rebuilt by Herod, in the most costly and magnificent manner, but we will keep the description of it until twelve

years later, when Jesus came to his first passover. Mary's offering of two turtle-doves, instead of a lamb and a turtle-dove, proves the poverty of Joseph, for only poor persons were allowed to substitute another turtle-dove or young pigeon for a lamb. These birds abound in the Holy Land, and were consequently of very small value. After she had made her offering, and before Joseph presented the child to the Lord, an old man, dwelling in Jerusalem, came into the temple. It had been revealed to him that he should not see death before his eyes had beheld the blessed vision of the Lord's Christ, for whom he had waited through many long years. Now, seeing this little child, he took him into his arms, and blessed God, saying, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." Whilst Joseph and Mary wondered at these words, Simeon blessed them, and speaking to Mary alone, he continued: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against; (yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."

This was the first word of sorrow that had fallen upon Mary's ears since the angel had appeared to her, more than ten months before, in her lowly home in Nazareth. Hitherto, the great mystery that set her apart from all other women had been full of rapture only. Her song had been one of triumphant gladness, with not a single note of sorrow mingling with it. Her soul had magnified the Lord, because he had regarded her low estate; she was hungry, and he had filled her with good things. She had heard through the countless ages of the future all generations calling her blessed. A new, mysterious, tender life had been breathed through her, and she had been overshadowed by the Highest, whose shadow is brighter than all earthly joys and glories. Now, for forty days she had nursed the Holy Child, and no dimness had come across her rapture. Yet, when she brings the child to his Father's house, the first word of sorrow is spoken, and the first faint thrill of a mother's ready fears crept coldly into her heart.

So as they walked home in the cool of the day to Bethlehem, and passed again the tomb of Rachel, Mary would probably be pondering over the words of Simeon, and wondering what the sword was that would pierce her own soul. The first prick of that sharp anguish was soon to make itself felt.

Besides Simeon, Anna, a very aged prophetess, had seen the child, and both spoke of him to them that looked for redemption or deliverance in Jerusalem. Quietly, and in trusted circles, would this event be spoken of;

for all knew the extreme danger of calling the attention of Herod to such a matter. They were too familiar with the cowardice and cruelty of their king to let any rumor reach him of the birth of the Messiah. It does not appear, moreover, that either Simeon or Anna knew where he was to be found. But a remarkable circumstance, which came to pass soon after, exposed the child of Bethlehem to the very peril they prudently sought to shield him from, and destroyed the hopes of those who did not know that he escaped the danger.

CHAPTER IV.

The Wise Men.

AMONG the many travellers who visited Jerusalem, which was the most magnificent city of the East, there came at this time a party of distinguished strangers, who had journeyed from the far East. They were soon known to be both wise and wealthy; men who had given up their lives to learned and scientific studies, especially that of astronomy. They said they had seen, in their close and ceaseless scrutiny of the sky, a new star, which, for some reason not known to us, they connected with the distant land of Judæa, and called it the star of the King of the Jews.

There was an idea spread throughout all countries at that time that a personage of vast wisdom and power, a Deliverer, was about to be born among the Jews. These wise men at once set off for the capital of Judæa; for where else could the King of the Jews be born? Possibly they may have expected to find all the city astir with rejoicings; but they could not even get an answer to their question, "Where is he?" Those who had heard of him had kept the secret faithfully. But before long Herod was told of these extraordinary strangers, and their search for a new-born King, who was no child of his. He was an old man, nearly seventy, and in a wretched state, both of body and mind; tormented by his conscience, yet not guided by it, and ready for any measure of cunning and cruelty. All Jerusalem was troubled with him, for not the shrewdest man in Jerusalem could guess what Herod would do in any moment of rage.

Herod immediately sent for all the chief priests and scribes, who came together in much fear and consternation, and demanded of them where the Messiah should be born. They did not attempt to hesitate, or conceal the birth-place. If any of them had heard of the child of Bethlehem, and



THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT.—MATT. 2 : 13.



THE ADORATION OF THE MAGI.—MATT. 2: 11.

Simeon's and Anna's statement concerning him, their dread of Herod was too powerful for them to risk their own lives in an attempt to shield him. "In Bethlehem," they answered promptly. Right glad would they be when Herod, satisfied with this information, dismissed them, and they went their way safe and sound to their houses. Thus at the outset the chief priests and scribes proved themselves unwilling to suffer anything for the Messiah, whose office it was to bring to them glory and dominion.

Privately, but courteously, Herod then sent for the wise men, and inquired of them diligently how long it was since the star appeared ; and bade them seek the child in Bethlehem, and when they had found him to bring him word; that he might go and do homage to him also. There was nothing in the king's manner or words to arouse their suspicions of his real purpose, and no doubt they set out for Bethlehem with the intention of returning to Jerusalem.

Still it appeared likely that there would be some difficulty in discovering the child, of whom they knew nothing certainly, except that they were to search, and to search diligently, for him in Bethlehem. They rejoiced with exceeding great joy, therefore, when, as they left the walls of Jerusalem behind them in the evening dusk, they saw the star again hanging in the southern sky, and going before them on their way. No need now for guides, no need to wander up and down the streets, asking for the new-born King. The star, or meteor, stood over the humble house where the young child was, and, entering in, they saw him, with Mary, his mother, and fell down, doing him homage as the King whose star was even now shining above the lowly roof that sheltered him. There was no palace, no train of servants, no guard, save the poor carpenter, whose day's work was done, and who was watching over the young child ; but they could not be mistaken. The future glorious King of the Jews was here.

They had not come from their distant country to seek a king empty-handed. Royal presents they had prepared and brought with them ; and now they opened their treasures, and offered costly gifts to him, gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, such as they would have presented, had they found the child in Herod's own palace in Jerusalem. Then, taking their leave, they were about to return to Herod, when a warning dream, which they could not mistake or misinterpret, directed them to depart into their country another way.

The hour was at hand when the costly gifts of the wise men would be necessary for the preservation of the poor little family, not yet settled and at

home in its new quarters. Even as a babe the Son of man had not where to lay his head ; and no spot on earth was a resting-place for him. After the wise men were gone, the angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word : for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him."

Mary's chilly fears then were being realized, and she felt the first prick of the sword that should pierce her soul. The visit of the wise men from the far East had been another hour of exultation and another testimony to the claims of her Son. Possibly they may have told her that the king himself wished to come down from Jerusalem, and worship him ; and dreams of splendor, of kingly and priestly protection for the infant Messiah might well fill her mind. But now she learned that Herod was seeking the child's life, to destroy him. They could not escape too quickly ; there was no time to be lost. The angel's words were urgent, "Arise, at once."

It was night ; a winter's night, but there must be no delay. At day-break the villagers would be astir, and they could not get away unseen. Before the gray streak of light was dawning in the east, they ought to be some miles on the road. Mary must carry the child, shielding him as best she could from the chilly dampness of the night ; and Joseph must load himself with the wise men's gifts. Little had she thought, when those rich foreigners were falling down before her child in homage, that only a night or two later she would be stealing with him through the dark and silent streets, as if she was a criminal, not the happy mother of the glorious Messiah. And they were to flee out of the Holy Land itself, into Egypt, the old land of bondage !

Unseen, unnoticed, the flight from Bethlehem was made. They were but strangers there ; and very few, if any, of the inhabitants would miss the strangers from Nazareth, who had settled among them so lately, and who had now gone away again with as little observation as they came.

Herod very soon came to the conclusion that the wise men, for some reason or other unknown to him, did not intend to obey his orders. They could very well have made the journey to Bethlehem in a day, and when he found that they did not return to him, he was exceeding wroth ; for kings do not often meet with those who disregard their invitations. He quickly made up his mind what to do. If the wise men had brought him word where the child was, he would have been content to slay only him ; now he must destroy all the infants under two years of age, to make sure of crushing

that life which threatened his crown. There was ample margin in the two years for any mistake on his own part, or that of the wise men. The child must perish if he put to death all the little ones of the unhappy village.

We wonder if the news reached Mary in her place of refuge and safety in Egypt. Whilst she went about the streets of Bethlehem she must have seen many of those little children in their mothers' arms; their laughter and their cries had rung in her ears; and with her newly-opened mother's eyes she had compared them with her own blessed child, and loved them dearly for his sake. Now she would know the dire meaning of these words, "In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." A mystery of grief began to mingle itself with the mystery of her Son's life. In her heart, which was forever pondering over the strange events that had already befallen him and herself, there must always have been a very sad memory of the children who had perished on his account; and it may be that one of the first stories her lips uttered to the little Son at her knee was the story of their winter's flight into Egypt, and the slaying of all the children under two years of age who lived in Bethlehem, the place where he was born.

CHAPTER V.

Nazareth.

HEROD died a shocking death, after terrible suffering both of mind and body. Once even, in his extreme misery, he attempted to put an end to himself, but was prevented by his attendants. A few days only before he died he put to death his son Antipater, and appointed his son Archelaus to succeed him as king in Judæa; but he separated Galilee from the kingdom, and left it to another son, Herod Antipas. He was in his seventieth year when he died, after reigning thirty-seven years; one of the most wicked and most wretched of kings.

It was now safe for Joseph and Mary to bring the child back to their native land. They seem to have had the idea of settling in Judæa again, instead of taking Jesus to the despised province of Galilee; but when they reached Judæa they heard that Archelaus reigned in the room of his father, Herod, and that during the passover week he had ordered his guards to

march into the temple amid the throng of worshippers, where they had massacred three thousand of the Jews. Such news naturally filled them with terror, and they might have sought safety again in Egypt; but Joseph was warned in a dream to go on into the land of Galilee. He was left to choose the exact place where he would settle down, and he returned to Nazareth, his and Mary's early home, where their kinsfolk lived. There was every reason why they should go back to Nazareth, since Jesus could not be brought up in his own city, the mournful little village of Bethlehem, where no child of his own age was now alive.

Here, in Nazareth, they were at home again; and long years of the most quiet blessedness lay before the mother of Jesus, though the trifling daily cares of life may have fretted it a little from too perfect a bliss for this world. The little child who played about her feet, who prattled beside her as she went down to the fountain for water, who listened with uplifted eyes to every word she spoke, never gave her a moment's pain, or made her heart ache by one careless or unkind word. Never once had the mother's voice to change its tone of tenderness into one of anger. Never had a frown to come across her loving and peaceful face when it was turned towards him. As he grew in wisdom and favor with God and man, she could rest upon that wisdom and grace, never to be disappointed, never to be thrown back upon herself. The most blessed years ever lived by woman were those of Mary, in the humble home in Nazareth.

It lay in the heart of the mountains, at the end of a little valley hardly a mile long, and not more than half a mile broad, with the barren slopes of hills shutting it in on every side. The valley was as green and fertile as a garden; and the village clung to the side of one of the mountains, half nestling at its foot. From the brow of the hills rising behind the village a splendid landscape was to be seen, westward to the glistening waters of the Mediterranean, with Mount Carmel stretching into them; northward as far as the snowy peaks of Hermon; and southward over the great plain of Jezreel, rich in cornfields; all the country being dotted over with villages and towns. The landscape is there still, and the deep blue sky hanging over all, and the clear atmosphere through which distant objects seem near, and the sighing of the wind across the plains, and the hum of insects, and the songs of birds; all is as it was when Jesus Christ climbed the mountains, as he loved to do, and sat on the summit, with a heart and spirit in full harmony with the loveliness around him, and with no secret sadness of the conscience to make him feel that he was not worthy to be there.

It was no lonely life that Jesus led. We read again and again of his brethren and sisters ; and though it is not generally thought that these could have been Mary's children,* but the children of her sister, they were so associated with him that all his life long they acted as his own brethren and sisters. With them he would go to school, and learn to read and write, for all Jews were carefully educated in these two branches. The books he had to study we know and possess in the Old Testament. Very probably he would own one of them, though they would be so costly as to be almost beyond his means, or those of his supposed father. We should like to know that he had the Book of Psalms, those psalms which Mary knew so well and had sung to him so often ; or the prophecy of Isaiah, in which his young, undimmed eyes, that had hardly looked upon sorrow yet, and had never smarted with tears of penitence, would read and read again the warning words of the Messiah's sufferings, "a man of sorrow, and acquainted with grief." When he was alone yonder on the breezy summit of the mountain, did he ever sing, "The Lord is my Shepherd?" And did he never whisper to himself the awful words, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Besides his cousins there were his neighbors all about him, quite commonplace people, who could not see how innocent and beautiful his life was. They were a passionate, rough race, notorious throughout the country, so that it had become almost a proverb, "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Jesus dwelt among them as one of them ; Joseph the carpenter's son. He could not yet heal the sick ; but is there no help and comfort in tender compassion for those who suffer ? The widow's son at Nain was not the first he had seen carried out for burial. The man born blind was not the only one groping about in darkness who felt his hand, and heard the pitying tones of his troubled voice. We may be sure that amongst his neighbors in Nazareth Jesus saw many a form of suffering, and his heart always echoed to a cry, if it were but the cry of an animal in pain.

In one other way Jesus shared the common lot of boys. He had to take to a trade which was not likely to have been his choice. Whether as the eldest son of a large family, or the only son of a woman left a widow, he had to learn the trade of his supposed father. The little workshop, where

* I agree in this opinion, chiefly for the reason that when Jesus died he committed Mary to the care of his young disciple John, which would seem unnatural to any tender-hearted, good mother, who had at least four other sons and two daughters living. Our Lord would hardly throw so much discredit upon such relationships.

neighbors could always drop in with their trifling gossip, or at work in their own houses, where they could grumble and find fault; this must have been irksome to him. The long, monotonous hours, the insignificant labor, the ceaseless buzz of chattering about him; we can understand how weary and worn his spirit must have felt as well as his body. If he could have been a shepherd, like Moses, the great lawgiver, and David, his own kingly ancestor, how far more fitting that would have seemed! How his courage and tenderness toward his flock would have been a type of what he would be in after life! The solitude would have been sweet to him, and the changing aspects of the seasons from year to year. In after life he often compared himself to a shepherd, but never once is there any reference to his uncongenial calling in the hot workshop of Nazareth, where the only advantage was that it did not separate him from his mother.

Does a blameless life win favor among any people? There was one man in Galilee, one only in the wide world, who never needed to go up to Jerusalem to offer any sacrifice for sin. Neither sin-offering nor trespass-offering had this man to bring to the altar of God. The peace-offering he could eat in the courts of the temple as a type of happy communion with the unseen God, and of a complete surrender of himself to his will. But, let the people scan his conduct as closely as village neighbors can do, not one among them could say that Jesus, the son of Joseph, had need to carry up to Jerusalem an offering for any trespass. Did they love him the better for this? Did he find honor among them? Nay, not even in his father's house.

CHAPTER VI.

The First Passover.

THERE is one incident, and only one, given to us of the early life of our Lord.

It was the custom of his parents to go up to Jerusalem once a year, to the feast of the passover. For the Jews living in Galilee it was a long journey; but the feast came at the finest time of the year for travelling, after the rains of winter, and before the dry heat of summer. It was a great yearly pilgrimage, in which troops from every village and town on the road came to swell the numbers as the pilgrims marched southward. Past the corn-fields, where the grain was already forming in the ear; under the mountain slopes, clothed with silvery olive trees and the young green of the vines;

across the babbling brooks, not yet dried by heat; through groves of sycamores and oak trees fresh in leaf, the long procession passed from town to town; sleeping safely in the open air by night, and journeying by pleasant stages in the day, until they reached Judæa; and, weary with the dusty road from Jericho to Jerusalem, shouted with joy when they turned a curve of the Mount of Olives, and saw the Holy City lying before them.

Jesus was twelve years old when, probably, he first made this long yet joyous march up to Jerusalem. We can fancy the eager boy "going on before them," as he did many years later when he went up to his last pass-over; hastening forward for that first glorious view of Jerusalem, which met his eye from Olivet, the mount which was to be so closely associated with his after life. There stood the Holy City, with its marble palaces crowning the heights of Zion; and the still more magnificent temple on its own mount, bathed in the brilliant light of the spring sunshine. The white, wondrous beauty of his Father's house, with the trembling columns of smoke ever rising from its altars through the clear air to the blue heavens above, rose opposite to him. We know the hymn that his tremulous, joyous lips would sing, and that would be echoed by the procession following him as they too caught sight of the house of God, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God!" Thousands upon thousands of pilgrims had chanted that psalm before him; but never one like that boy of twelve, when his father's house was first seen by his happy eyes.

Perhaps there was no hour of perfect happiness like that to Jesus again. Joseph was still alive, caring for him and protecting him. His mother, who could not but recall the strange events that had accompanied his birth, kept him at her side as they entered the temple, pointing out to him the splendor and the sacred symbols of the place. The silvery music of the temple service; the thunder of the amens of the vast congregations; the faint scent of incense wafted towards him; all fell upon the vivid, delicate senses of youth. And below these visible signs there was breaking upon him their deep, invisible, spiritual meaning; though not yet darkened with the shadow of that awful burden to be laid upon himself, when he, as the Lamb of God, was to take away the sins of the world. This was the time, perhaps, when "he was anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows" more than at any other season of his life.

The temple had been rebuilt by Herod in the vain hope of winning popu-

larity among his people. The outer walls formed a square of a thousand feet, with double or treble rows of aisles between ranks of marble pillars. These colonnades surrounded the first court, that of the Gentiles, into which foreigners might enter, though they were forbidden to go further upon pain of death. A flight of fifteen steps led from this court into that of the women, a large space where the whole congregation of worshippers assembled, but beyond which women were not allowed to go, unless they had a sacrifice to offer. The next court had a small space railed off, called the Court of Israel; but the whole bore the name of the Court of the Priests, in which stood a great altar of unhewn stones forty-eight feet square, upon which three fires were kept burning continually, for the purpose of consuming the sacrifices. Beyond these courts stood the actual temple, containing the Holy Place, which was entered by none but a few priests, who were chosen by lot daily; and the Holiest of Holies, open only to the high-priest himself, and to him but once a year, on the great day of atonement.

It was here, in the temple, that Jesus loved to be during his sojourn in Jerusalem; but the feast was soon ended, and his parents started homewards with the returning band of pilgrims. Probably Jesus set off with them from the place where they had lodged; and they, supposing him to be with some of his young companions, with his cousins perhaps, went a day's journey from Jerusalem. But when the night fell, and they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance, he was nowhere to be found. A terrible night would that be for both of them, but especially for Mary, whose fears for him had been slumbering during the quiet years at Nazareth, but were not dead. Was it possible that any one could have discovered their cherished secret, that this was the child whom the wise men had come so far to see, and for whom Herod had slain so many infants in Bethlehem? They turned back to Jerusalem seeking him in sorrow. It was the third day before they found him. Where he lived those three days we do not know. Why not "where the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow a nest for herself?" It was in the temple that Joseph and Mary found him; in one of the public rooms or halls opening out of the court of the Gentiles, where the rabbis and those learned in the law were wont to assemble for teaching or argument. Jesus was in the midst of them asking questions, and answering those put to him by the astonished rabbis, who had not expected much understanding from this boy from Galilee. His parents themselves were amazed when they saw him there; and Mary,



CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

"AND ALL THAT HEARD HIM WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS UNDERSTANDING."—LUKE 2:47.



"GET THEE HENCE, SATAN."—MATT. 4 : 10.

who seems to have had no difficulty in approaching him, spoke to him chidingly.

"Son," she said, "why hast thou dealt thus with us? behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing."

The question fell upon him as the first dimness upon the glory and gladness of his sojourn in the temple. The poor home at Nazareth, his father Joseph, the carpenter's shop, the daily work, pressed back upon him in the place of the temple music, the prayer, the daily sacrifice. There they stood, his supposed father, weary with the long search, and his mother looking at him with sorrowful, reproaching eyes. He was ready to go back with them, but he could not go without a pang.

"How is it that ye sought me?" he asked, sadly; "did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"

But he had not come to this earth to dwell in his Father's house; and he must leave it now, only to revisit it from time to time. "He went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them: but his mother kept all these sayings in her heart."

Eighteen more years, years of monotonous labor, did Jesus live in Nazareth. Changes came to his home as well as to others. Joseph died, and left his mother altogether dependent upon him. Galilee was still governed by Herod Antipas; but in Judæa the King Archelaus had been dethroned, and the country was made a province of Rome, under Roman governors. This had happened whilst Jesus was a boy, and a rebellion had been attempted under a leader called Judas of Galilee, which had caused great excitement. Though it had been put down by the Romans, there still remained a party, secretly popular, who used every effort to free their country from the Roman yoke. So strong had grown the longing for the Messiah, that a number of the people were ready to embrace the cause of any leader, who would claim that title, and lead them against their enemies and masters.

There was a numerous class of his fellow-countrymen to whom Jesus must have been naturally drawn during his youth, and to whom he may have attached himself for a time. This was the sect of the Pharisees, noble and patriotic as our Puritans were, in the beginning; and at all times living a frugal and devout life, in fair contrast with the Sadducees, who were wealthy, luxurious, and indifferent. The Pharisees were mostly of the middle classes; and their ceaseless devotion to religion gave them great authority among the common people. To the child Jesus they must have

appeared nearer to God than any other class. There were among them two parties: one following a rabbi of the name of Hillel, who was a gentle, cautious, tolerant man, averse to making enemies, and of a most merciful and forgiving disposition. Some say that he began to teach only thirty years before the birth of Christ; and it is certainly amongst his disciples that Jesus found some friends and followers. The second party was that of Shammai, who differed from the other in numberless ways. They were well known for their fierceness and jealousy, for stirring up the people against any one they hated, and for shrinking from no bloodshed in furthering their religious views. They were scrupulous about the fulfilment of the most trivial laws which had come down to them through tradition. These had grown so numerous through the lapse of centuries, that it was scarcely possible to live for an hour without breaking some commandment.

Yet among the Pharisees there were many right-minded and noble men, to whom Jesus must have been attracted. "The only true Pharisee," said the Talmud, that collection of traditions which they held to be of equal authority with the Scriptures—"the only true Pharisee is he who does the will of his Father which is in heaven because he loves him." Such Pharisees, when he met with them, as he did meet with them, won his love and approbation. It was the "Scribes and Pharisees, *hypocrites*," whom he hated.



BOOK II.

THE PROPHET.

CHAPTER I.

John the Baptist.



JESUS was about thirty years of age when a rumor reached Nazareth of a prophet who had appeared in Judæa. It was more than four hundred years since a prophet had arisen ; but it was well known that Elias must come before Messiah as his forerunner. Such a prophet was now baptizing in Jordan ; and all Judæa and Jerusalem itself were sending multitudes to be baptized by him. Before long his name was known : it was John, the son of Elisabeth, Mary's cousin, whose birth had taken place six months before that of Jesus.

We have no reason to suppose that any person living at this time, except Mary, knew Jesus to be the Son of God. Those who had known it were Joseph, Zacharias, and Elisabeth ; and all these were dead. John, to whom we might suppose his parents would tell the mysterious secret, says expressly that he did not know him to be the Messiah until it was revealed to him from heaven. He was familiar with his cousin Jesus, and felt himself, with all his stern, rigid life in the wilderness, to be unworthy to stoop down and unloose the latchet of his sandals ; although he was a priest, who was known throughout the land as a prophet, and Jesus was merely a village carpenter, whose life had been a common life of toil amidst his comrades. Mary alone knew her son to be the promised Messiah ; and though the long years may somewhat have dulled her hopes, they flamed up again suddenly when the news came that John the forerunner had begun to preach "The kingdom of God is at hand," and that multitudes, even of the Pharisees, were flocking to his baptism, so to enlist themselves as subjects of the new kingdom.

But this news did not make any change in our Lord. There was not less

tenderness and pity in his heart when he lived among his neighbors in Nazareth than when he healed the sick who came to him from every quarter. Neither was there any more ambition in his spirit when he passed from town to town, amid a throng of followers, than when he climbed up into the loneliness of the mountains about his village home. How could he be touched by any earthly ambition, who knew himself to be not only a Son of God, but the only-begotten Son of the Father? He had been waiting through these quiet, homely years for the call to come, and now he was ready to quit all, with the words in his heart, "Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O my God!"

It may well be that Mary went with him a little way on his road towards Jordan, on that wintry morning, when he quitted his workshop, and the familiar streets of Nazareth, to dwell in them no more. There was no surprise to her in what had come to pass; but there must have been a thrill of exultation mingled with fear. He had been her son all these years, but now he was to belong, not to her, but to the nation. What sorrow and triumph must have been in her heart when at last he bade her farewell, and she watched him as long as he was in sight, clad in the robe she had woven for him without seam, like the robe of a priest. Was he not a priest and a king already to her?

It was winter, and though not cold in the valley of the Jordan, the heavy and continuous rains must have dispersed the multitudes that had gone out to John, leaving him almost in solitude once more. There could have been no crowd of spectators when Jesus was baptized. Yet even in January there are mild and sunny days when he and John might have gone down into the river for the significant rite which was to mark the beginning of his new career. But John would not at first consent to baptize his cousin Jesus, declaring that it would be more fit for himself to be baptized by one whose life had been holier and happier than his own. The rich and powerful and pious Pharisees John had sent away with rebukes, yet when Jesus came from Galilee, he forbade him.

But Jesus would not take his refusal. For some months John had been waiting for a sign promised to him from heaven, which should point out to him the true Messiah; and the people of the land looked to him to show them the Christ, whose kingdom he was proclaiming. Now, after he had baptized his cousin in the waters of the Jordan, already troubled with the rains from the mountains, and they were coming up again out of the river, he saw the pale wintry sky above them opening, and the Spirit of God de-

scending, visible to his eyes in the form of a dove, which lighted upon Jesus, whilst a voice came from heaven, speaking to him, and saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." What passed between them further, the Messiah and his forerunner, we are not told. Jesus did not stay with John the Baptist, for immediately he left him and the place where he had been baptized, and went away into the wilderness, far from the busy haunts of ordinary men, such as he had dwelt among until now. His commonplace, everyday life was ended, and had fallen from him forever. A dense cloud of mystery, which no one has been able to pierce through, surrounds the forty days in which he was alone in the wilderness, suffering the first pangs of the grief with which he was bruised and smitten for our iniquities, being fiercely assailed of the devil, that he might himself suffer being tempted, and so able to succor all those who are tempted. The compassion and fellow-feeling he had before had for sufferers he was henceforth to feel for sinners. There was to be no gulf between him and the sinners he was about to call to repentance; he was to be their friend, their companion, and it was his part to know the stress and strain of temptation which had overcome them. Sinners were to feel, when they drew near to him, that he knew all about them and their sins, and needed not that any man should tell him. He had been in all points tempted as they had been.

CHAPTER II.

Cana of Galilee.

WHEN Jesus returned to Jordan the short winter of Palestine was over, and already an eager crowd had gathered again about John. On the day of his return a deputation from the Pharisees had come from Jerusalem to question John as to his authority for thus baptizing the people. They were the religious rulers of the nation, and felt themselves bound to inquire into any new religious rite, and to ask for the credentials of any would-be prophet. These priests who had come to see John knew him to be a priest, and were, probably, inclined to take his part, if they could do so in safety. They asked him, eagerly, "Art thou Christ?" "Art thou Elias?" "Art thou that prophet?" And when he answered, "No," they ask again, "Who art thou? What sayest thou of thyself?" The crowd was listening, and Jesus, standing amongst them, was also listening for his

reply. "I am a voice," he said, "the voice spoken of by Isaiah the prophet, crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the ways of the Lord." The priests were disappointed with this answer, and asked, "Why baptizest thou then?" They had not given him authority to appear as a prophet, yet here he was drawing great multitudes about him, and publicly reproofing the most religious sect of the nation, calling them a generation of vipers, and bidding them bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. From that time they began to throw discredit upon the preaching of John the Baptist, and spoke spitefully against him, saying, "He hath a devil." Nothing is easier than to fling a bad name at those who are not of our own way of thinking.

Two days after this, John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to two of his disciples as the Messiah whose coming he had foretold. These two, Andrew and a young man named John, immediately followed Jesus, and being invited by him to the place where he was staying, they remained the rest of the day with him; probably took their first meal with him, their hearts burning within them as he opened the Scriptures to their understanding. The next morning Andrew met with his brother Simon, and said, "We have found the Messiah," and brought him to Jesus. The day following, Jesus was about to start home again to Galilee, and seeing Philip, who already knew him, he said to him, "Follow me!" Simon and Andrew, who were Philip's townsmen, were at that time with Jesus; Philip was ready to obey, but he first found Nathanael, and said to him, "Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph, is he of whom Moses and the prophets did write!" "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" cried Nathanael, doubtingly; but he went to Jesus and was so satisfied by the few words he spoke to him, that he exclaimed, "Rabbi, thou art the Son of God; thou art the King of Israel!"

With these five followers Jesus turned his steps homewards, after an absence of nearly two months. All of them lived in Galilee; and Simon Peter and Andrew, who had a house in Capernaum, at the head of the lake of Galilee, appear to have turned off and left the little company at the point where their nearest way home crossed the route taken by the others. Jesus went on with the other three: Philip, whom he had distinctly called to follow him; Nathanael, whose home in Cana of Galilee lay directly north of Nazareth; and John, who was hardly more than a youth, and as yet free from the ties and duties of manhood. A pleasant march must that have been along the valleys lying south of Mount Tabor, with the spring

sun shining overhead, and all the green sward bedecked with flowers, and the birds singing in the cool, fragrant air of morning and evening.

But they did not find Mary at Nazareth. She was gone with the cousins of Jesus to a marriage at Cana in Galilee, the town of Nathanael, where he had a home, to which he gladly urged his new-found rabbi to go. He could not have foreseen this pleasure; but now, as they went on northward to Cana, the Messiah was his guest, and, with Philip and John, was to enter into his house. But no sooner was it known that they were come into the village than Jesus was called with his friends, one of whom was an old neighbor of the bridegroom, to join the marriage feast.

There was very much that Mary longed to hear from her son after this long absence; but the circumstances could not have been favorable for it. In his beloved face, worn and pale with his forty days of temptation and fasting in the wilderness, her eyes saw a change which told plainly that his new life had begun in suffering. He looked as if he had passed through a trial which set him apart. Perhaps he found time to tell her of his hunger in the desert, and the temptation which came to him to use his miraculous powers in order to turn stones into bread for himself. It seems that, in some way or other, she knew that, like Elijah and Elisha, the great prophets of olden times, he could and would work miracles as a sign to the people that he came from God; and she felt all a mother's eagerness that he should at once manifest his glory.

So when there was no more wine she turned to him, hoping for some open proof to the friends about her that he possessed this wonder-working power. Besides, she had been accustomed to turn to him in every trouble, in any trifling, household difficulty; casting all her cares upon him, because she knew he cared for her. So she said to him quietly, yet significantly, "They have no wine." Some of Elisha's miracles had been even more homely; he had made the poisoned pottage fit for food, and had fed a company of people with but a scanty supply of barley-cakes. Why should not Jesus gladden the feast and save his friends from shame, by making the wine last out to the end?

A few days before our Lord had been in the desert, amid the wild beasts, with the devil tempting him. Now he, who was to be in all things one with us, was sitting at a marriage feast among his friends; his mother and kinsfolk there, with his new followers; every face about him glad and happy. It was not the first marriage he had been at, for his sisters, no doubt, were married, and living at Nazareth; and he knew what the mor-

tification would be if the social mirth came too suddenly to an end. He cared for these little pleasures and little innocent enjoyments, and would not have them spoiled. The miracle he refused to work to satisfy his own severe hunger he wrought for the innocent pleasure of the friends who were rejoicing around him. There were six water-pots of stone standing by for the use of the guests in washing their hands before sitting down to the table, and he bade the servants first to fill them up again with water to the brim, and then to draw out, and bear to the ruler of the feast. Upon tasting it he cried out to the bridegroom, "Every man at the beginning doth set forth good wine; but thou hast kept the good wine until now."

So Christ changes water into wine, tears into gladness, the waves and floods of sorrow into a crystal sea, whereon the harpers stand, having the harps of God. But he can work this miracle only for his friends; none but those who loved him drank of that wine. It was no grand miracle of giving sight to eyes born blind, or raising to life a widow's son. Yet there is a special fitness in it. He had long known what poverty, and straitness, and household cares were, and he must show that these common troubles were not beneath his notice; no, nor the little secret pangs of anxiety and disappointment which we so often hide from those about us. We are not all called to bear extraordinary sorrows, but most of us know what trifling cares are; and it was one of these small household difficulties the Son of man met by his first miracle.

After this, Jesus, with his mother, and brethren, and disciples, went down to Capernaum for a few days, until it was time to go on their yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem, to the feast of the passover, which was near at hand. Peter and Andrew were living there, and might join them in their journey to Judæa; though they do not seem to have stayed with our Lord, but probably returned after the passover to their own home until he considered it a fit time to call them to leave all and follow him.

CHAPTER III.

The First Summer.

FOR the first time Jesus went up to Jerusalem with his little band of followers, who knew him to be the Messiah; and his cousins, who did not yet believe in him, but were apparently willing to do so if he would act as they expected the Messiah to act. If he would repeat his miracle on a



"MAKE NOT MY FATHER'S HOUSE AN HOUSE OF MERCHANDISE."—JOHN 2 : 16.



CHRIST AND NICODEMUS.

"EXCEPT A MAN BE BORN AGAIN, HE CANNOT SEE THE KINGDOM OF GOD."—JOHN 3:3.

large scale, and so convince the mass of the people, they were ready enough to proclaim him as the Messiah.

Would not John the Baptist be there too? He as a priest, and as a prophet, would no doubt be looked for, as Jesus afterwards was, at the feast of the passover. He must have had a strong impetuous yearning to see him who had been pointed out to him as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world. Maybe he ate the paschal supper with Jesus and his disciples. We fancy we see him, the well-known hermit-prophet from the wilderness, in his robe of camel's hair, with its leathern girdle, and his long, shaggy hair, and weatherbeaten face, following closely the steps of Jesus, through the streets, and about the courts of the temple, listening to his words with thirsty ears, and calling himself "the friend of the bridegroom, which standeth and heareth him, rejoicing greatly because of the bridegroom's voice." It was the last passover John the Baptist would ever celebrate; though that he could not know.

Upon going up into the temple, Jesus found the court of the Gentiles thronged with sheep, and oxen, and doves, animals needed for the sacrifices, but disturbing the congregation, which assembled in the court of the women, by their incessant lowing and cooing. Money-changers were sitting there also; for Roman coins were now in common use instead of the Jewish money, which alone was lawful for payment in the temple. No doubt there was a good deal of loud and angry debate round the tables of the money-changers; and a disgraceful confusion and disorder prevailed. Jesus took up a scourge of small cords, and drove out of the temple the noisy oxen and sheep, bidding the sellers of the doves to carry them away. The tables of the money-changers he overturned; and no one opposed him, but conscious of the scandal they had brought upon the temple, they retreated before him. "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise," he said. To him it was always his "Father's house;" and before he could manifest forth his glory, his Father must first be glorified. The disciples, looking upon his face, remembered that it had been written, "The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

But the priests and Levites of the temple, to whom this traffic brought much profit, were not so easily conscience-pricked as the merchants had been. They could not defend the wrong practices, but they came together to question the authority of this young stranger from Galilee. If John the Baptist had done it, probably they would not have ventured to speak, for all the people counted him a prophet. But this was a new man from Galilee!

The Jews held the Galileans in scorn, as only little better than the Samaritans. "What sign shewest thou," they ask, "seeing that thou doest such things?" The things were signs themselves; the mighty, prevailing anger of the Lord, and the smitten consciences of the merchants, if they had not been too blind to see them. Jesus gave them a mysterious answer, which none could understand. "Destroy this temple," he said, "and in three days I will raise it up." What! were they to pull down all they most prided in, and trusted in: their temple, which had been forty and six years in building! They left him, but they treasured up his words in their memories. The disciples also remembered them, and believed them when the mysterious sign was fulfilled.

But Jesus did not seek to convince the people without signs, and signs which they could understand. He worked certain miracles in Jerusalem during the week of the feast, which won a degree of faith from many. But their faith was not strong and true enough for him to trust to it, and he held himself aloof from them. What they looked for was an earthly king, who should plot and conspire for the throne; and the Roman soldiers, who garrisoned the strong fortress which overlooked the temple, would not have borne the rumor of such a king. There was at all times great danger of these expectations reaching the ears of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, who was not a man to shrink from needless bloodshed. For the sake of the people themselves Jesus did not commit himself unto them.

Amongst those who heard of the miracles he had wrought was one of the Pharisees, a member of the great religious committee among them called the Sanhedrim. His name was Nicodemus, and he came to our Lord by night, to inquire more particularly what he was teaching. Jesus told him more distinctly than he had yet done what his new message to the Jews and to the whole world was: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Nicodemus went away strongly impressed with the new doctrine, though not prepared to give up all for its sake, and not yet called upon to do so. But from that time Jesus had a firm friend in the very midst of the Pharisees, who used his powerful influence to protect him; and the feast passed by without any further jealous interference from the priests.

But it was not quite safe or suitable to remain in Jerusalem; and after the greater number of their friends and kinsmen had returned home, Jesus, with two or three of his disciples, sought the banks of the Jordan, whither

John the Baptist had already returned. The harvest was beginning, for it was near the end of April, and bands of harvesters passed to and fro from uplands to lowlands until all the corn was gathered in by the end of June. Down in the valley of the Jordan the summer is very hot; and the wants of life are few. They could sleep in the open air, or in some hut of branches rudely woven together; and their food, like John the Baptist's, cost little or nothing. There was to be no settled home henceforth for any one of them. The disciples had left all to follow the Son of man, and he had not where to lay his head.

Crowds of eager and curious followers came to Jesus, as the year before they had flocked to John the Baptist, who had now moved some miles farther up the river, and was still preaching "The kingdom of God is at hand." But John did no miracle, and the crowds that followed Jesus were greater than those who followed him. In the eyes of the Pharisees it must have seemed that the two prophets were in rivalry; and many a jest and a sneer would be heard in the temple courts and in the streets of Jerusalem as they talked of those "two fanatics" on the banks of the Jordan. Even John the Baptist's disciples fancied that a wrong was done their rabbi by this new teacher, who had been with him for a while, and so learned his manner of arousing and teaching the people. They went to John, and said, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou bearest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come unto him."

Now was John's opportunity to manifest a wonderful humility and devotion. "I am of the earth, earthy, and speak of the earth," he said; "he that cometh from heaven is above all. The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hands. I am but the friend of the bridegroom; I stand and hear him, and rejoice greatly because of his voice. This my joy therefore is fulfilled."

Did he hear that voice often, and rejoice in it? There were not many miles separating them, and both of them were hardy and used to long marches. It may well be that during those summer months they met often on the banks of the river—the happiest season of John's life. For he had been a lonely, unloved man, living a wild life in the wilderness, strange to social and homelike ways; his father and mother long since dead, with neither brother nor sister, he would find in Jesus all the missing relationships, and pour out to him the richest treasures of a heart that no loving trust had opened until now.

So the summer passed away, and the autumn with its vintage; then the

rainy months drew near. Bands of harvestmen and bands of pilgrims had gone by, tarrying for a few hours to learn truths they had never heard before, even in the temple. Many of them were baptized by the disciples, though Jesus baptized not. The new prophet had become more popular than the old prophet, and John's words were fulfilled, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

CHAPTER IV.

Samaria.

THERE were several reasons why our Lord should leave the banks of the Jordan, besides that of the rainy season coming on. The Pharisees were beginning to take more special notice of him, having heard that he had made more disciples even than John, whom they barely tolerated. Moreover, this friend and forerunner of his had been seized by Herod, the tetrarch of Galilee, and cast into a dreary prison on the east of the Dead sea. This violent measure was likely to excite a disturbance among the people; and Jesus, whose aim was in no way to come into collision with the government, could not prudently remain in a neighborhood too near the fortress where John was imprisoned. He therefore withdrew from the Jordan, in the month of December or January, having been in Judæa since the feast of the passover in the spring.

One way to his old home, the place where his relatives were still living, lay through Samaria, a country he had probably never crossed, as the inhabitants were uncivil and churlish towards all Jewish travellers, especially if their faces were towards Jerusalem. But Jesus was journeying to Galilee, and did not expect them to be actively hostile to him and his little band of companions. It was an interesting road, and led him through Shechem, one of the oldest cities in the world, lying between Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim, in a vale so narrow at the eastern end, that when the priests stood on these mountains to pronounce the blessings and the curses in the ears of all the children of Israel, there was no difficulty for the people standing in the valley to hear distinctly. Two miles away was a very deep well, the waters of which were cool in the hottest summer; a well dug by the patriarch Jacob upon the same parcel of a field where he built his first altar to the God of Israel. Here too were buried the bones of Joseph, which had been carried for forty years through the wilderness to the land his father

Jacob had given to him and to his children specially. Shiloh also lay along the route; and Jesus, who possessed every innocent and refined taste, must have enjoyed passing through these ancient places, so intimately connected with the early history of his nation.

Shechem lay about eighteen or twenty miles distant from the fords of Jordan, near which we suppose Jesus to have been dwelling. By the time he and his disciples reached Jacob's well, after this long morning's march, it was noonday, and he was wearied, more wearied than the rest, who appear always to have been stronger than he was. They left him sitting by the side of the well, whilst they went on into the city to buy food for their mid-day meal. Their Master was thirsty, but the well was deep, and they had nothing to draw up the water. They hastened on, therefore, eager to return with food for him whom they loved to minister to.

Not long after a Samaritan woman came to draw water, and was much astonished when this Jew asked her to give him some to drink. She was probably less churlish than a man would have been, though she was barely civil. But as Jesus spoke with her she made the discovery that he was a prophet; and immediately referred to him the most vexing question which separated the Jews from the Samaritans. The latter had a temple upon Mount Gerizim, which had been rebuilt by Herod, as the temple at Jerusalem had been; and she asked which is the place where men ought to worship? Here, or at Jerusalem? She could only expect one answer from a Jew; an answer to excuse her anger, and send her away from the well without satisfying his thirst. But Jesus had now forgotten both thirst and weariness. He knew that many a sorrowful heart had prayed to God as truly from Mount Gerizim as from the temple at Jerusalem. There is no special place, he answered, for in every place men may worship the Father; the true worshippers worship him in spirit and in truth, for God is a Spirit. This was no such answer as the woman looked for; and her next words were spoken in a different temper. "We are looking for the Messiah, as well as the Jews," she said, "and when he is come, he will tell us all things that we do not yet know." Jesus had already told her the circumstances of her own life, and she was looking at him wistfully, with this thought of the Messiah in her mind, when he said to her more plainly, more distinctly, perhaps, than he had ever done before to any one, "I that speak to thee am he."

By this time the disciples had come back, and were much astonished to find him talking to the woman. If they heard these last words they would

marvel still more, for Jesus generally left men to discover his claims to the Messiahship. The wrong impression prevailing among the Jews concerning the Messiah was not shared by the Samaritans. The latter kept closely to the plain and simple law of Moses, without receiving the traditions which the Pharisees held of equal importance with the law, and were thus more ready to understand the claims and work of Christ. The woman therefore hurried back to the city, leaving her water-pot, and called together the men of the place to come out and see if this man were not the Christ. They besought him to stay with them in their ancient city under the Mount of Blessing; and, no doubt very much to the amazement of his disciples, he consented, and abode there two days, spending the time in teaching them his doctrine, the very inner meaning of which he had already laid open to the woman. "God is a Spirit; he is the Father, whom every true worshipper may worship in the recesses of his own spirit." Many of them believed, and said to the woman, "We have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, *the Saviour of the world*." Wonderful words, which filled the heart of Christ with rejoicing. Not his own nation, not his own disciples, not even his own kinsmen, had learned so much of his mission as these Samaritans; ever afterwards he spoke of them with tenderness, and when he would take a type of himself in the parable of the man fallen among thieves, he chose not a Jew, but a despised Samaritan.

From Sychar Jesus passed through one of the long deep valleys which lead to the plain of Esdraelon, where he was once more in Galilee. It was winter, and the snow was glistening on the lower mountains, as well as upon the distant range of Lebanon. The heavy rains had swollen the brooks into floods; and all the great plain before him, which in four months' time would be ripe for harvest, a sea of golden grain, scarcely rippled by a gust of wind, was now lying in wintry brownness and desolation, and swept by the storms of hail and rain. He seems to have passed by Nazareth, staying, if he stayed at all, for a few hours only, and to have gone on with Nathanael to his home in Cana, where Jesus had many friends, especially the bridegroom whose marriage-feast in the spring he had made glad with no common gladness.

He had not been long in Cana before the streets of the little village witnessed the arrival of a great nobleman from Capernaum, who had heard of the fame of Jesus in Judæa, and the miracles he had wrought there. Until now, with the exception of Nicodemus, it would seem that none but people of his own class had sought him, or brought their sick to be healed by him.

But this nobleman had a son, whose life all the skill of the Jewish physicians could not save; and his last hope lay with Jesus. His faith could not grasp more than the idea that if Jesus came, like any other physician, to see and touch the child, he would have the power to heal him. "Sir, come down," he cried, "before my son is dead." "Go thy way," Jesus answered; "thy son liveth." What was there in his voice and glance which filled the father's heart with perfect trust and peace? The nobleman did not hurry away, though there was time for him to reach home before nightfall. But the next day, as he was going down to Capernaum, he met his servants, who had been sent after him with the good news that the fever had left his son yesterday at the seventh hour; that same hour when Jesus had said to him, "Thy son liveth."

Now he had a friend and disciple amongst the wealthiest and highest classes in Capernaum, as he had one amongst the Sanhedrim at Jerusalem. Both protected him as much as it lay in their power; and it is supposed by many that the mother of the child thus healed was the same as Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, who, with other women, attended our Lord during the last year of his life, and ministered to him of their substance. Thus, on every hand, Jesus was making friends and enemies. A year had scarcely passed since he quitted his humble home in Nazareth; but his name was already known throughout Judæa, Galilee, and Samaria; and everywhere people were ranging themselves into two parties, for and against him. Amongst the common people he had few enemies; amongst the wealthy and religious classes he had few friends. He felt the peculiar difficulty these latter classes had in following him; and expressed it in two sayings, "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," and "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God."

CHAPTER V.

The First Sabbath Miracle.

AFTER staying a short time in Cana, Jesus went once more to Jerusalem, about the middle of March, a month or so before the pass-over. At this time there was a feast of the Jews, not a religious, but rather a national feast, in celebration of the deliverance of their race in the days of Esther. It drew together many of the poorer and lower classes, among

whom our Lord's work specially lay, and so offered to him, perhaps, unusual opportunities for mingling with the common people living near Jerusalem. For we do not suppose that the Galileans went up to this feast; only the country-folks dwelling in Judæa, within a few miles of their chief city, who could make a holiday at that time of the year. Either upon the feast-day itself, or the Sabbath day nearest to it, Jesus walked down to the sheep-gate of the city, near which was a pool, possessing the singular property, so it was believed, of healing the first person who could get into it after there had been seen a certain troubling of the water. A great crowd of impotent folk, of halt, blind and withered, lay about waiting for this movement of the surface of the pool. There was no spot in Jerusalem where we could sooner expect to find our Lord, with his wondrous power of healing all manner of diseases. Not even his Father's house was more likely to be trodden by his feet than this Bethesda, or house of mercy. Probably there was a greater throng than usual, because of the feast, which would offer an opportunity to many to come out of the country. Jesus passed by until he singled out one man, apparently because he knew he had now been crippled for thirty-eight years, and had been so friendless that during all that time he had no man to help him to get down first to the water. The cripple was hopeless, but still lingered there, as if to watch others win the blessing which he could never reach.

Upon this miserable man Jesus looked down with his pitying eyes, and said, as though speaking to one who would not hesitate to obey him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

It seems as though Jesus passed on, and was lost in the crowd; but the cripple felt a strange strength throbbing through his withered limbs. He was made whole, and he took up his bed, to return home, if he had any home, or at least to escape from that suffering multitude. Then did the Pharisees behold the terrible spectacle of a man carrying his bed through the streets of Jerusalem on the Sabbath day! They cried to him hastily, "It is not lawful for thee to carry thy bed on the Sabbath day." He answered them by telling the story of his miraculous cure, though he did not know who the stranger was, for Jesus was gone away. No doubt he put his burden down at the bidding of the Pharisees, but he did not lose the new strength that had given him power to take it up.

The same day Jesus found him in the temple, whither he had gone in his gladness. Once more those pitying, searching eyes were fixed upon him, and the voice that had spoken to him in the morning sounded again in his



"WHOSOEVER DRINKETH OF THE WATER THAT I SHALL GIVE HIM SHALL NEVER
THIRST."—JOHN 4: 14.



CHRIST HEALING THE SICK.

"HE LAID HIS HANDS ON EVERY ONE OF THEM, AND HEALED THEM."—LUKE 4 : 40.

ears. "Behold," said Jesus, "thou art made whole; sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee." The man departed and told the Pharisees who it was that had made him whole, thinking, no doubt, to bring praise and glory to his deliverer.

Possibly until now the presence of Jesus at this feast had not been known to the Pharisees. The last time he was in Jerusalem he had solemnly and emphatically claimed the temple as his Father's house, and had indirectly reproved them by assuming the authority to rid it of the scandals they had allowed to creep into it. Now they found him deliberately setting aside one of their most binding rules for keeping the Sabbath. John the Baptist, though both priest and prophet, had never ventured so far. Their religion of rites and ceremonies, of traditions, of shows and shams, was in danger. With their religion, they firmly believed their place and nation would go, and Jerusalem and Judæa would become like the heathen cities and countries about them. It was time to put a stop to it. John the Baptist was in prison. What if Jesus of Nazareth could be slain quietly, so as not to disturb the common people, who heard him gladly?

Jesus then, forewarned, it may be, by a friend, found himself compelled to quit Jerusalem hastily, instead of sojourning there till the coming passover. He was now too well known in the streets of the city to escape notice. More than this, if he stayed until the Galileans came up to the feast, there would be constant danger of his followers coming into collision with the Pharisees. Riots in Jerusalem at the time of the feasts were not uncommon, and often ended in bloodshed. Not long before, Pilate had slain eighteen Galileans in some tumult in the temple courts; and there was every probability that some such calamity might occur again should any provocation arise.

Jesus, therefore, retreated from Jerusalem with a few friends who were with him. He had not yet chosen his band of twelve apostles, but John, the youngest and dearest of them all, was with him, for it is he alone who has given us this record of the first year of our Lord's ministry. Philip, also, we suppose to have been his disciple from the first, in obedience to the call, "Follow me;" for Jesus seems to have been particularly grieved with his dulness of mind, when he says to him, "Have I been so long time with you, Philip, and yet hast *thou* not known me?" Moreover, when Jesus was next at Jerusalem for the passover, those Greeks who wished to see him came and spoke to Philip as being best known as the attendant of our Lord. Whether there were other disciples with him, or who they were,

we do not know. It was a little company that had lived together through eleven months, most of which had been spent on the banks of the Jordan, in a peaceful and happy seclusion, save for the multitudes that came to be taught the new doctrine, or to be healed of their afflictions. Now they were to be persecuted, to have spies lurking about them, to be asked treacherous questions, to have perjured witnesses ready to swear anything against them, and to feel from day to day that their enemies were powerful and irreconcilable. With a sad foresight of what must be the end, our Lord left Jerusalem and returned into Galilee.

CHAPTER VI.

His Old Home.

JESUS came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. His aunt, Mary Cleophas, was still living there with her children, if his mother was not. The old familiar home was the same, and the steep, narrow streets of the village in which he had played and worked. Coming down to it from the unfriendly city of Jerusalem, it seemed like a little nest of safety, lying amongst its pleasant hills. Here, at least, so his disciples might think, they would find repose and friendship; and the soreness of heart that must have followed the knowledge that the Jews sought to slay their Master would here be healed and forgotten.

The Sabbath had come round again; a week since he had given strength to the cripple. It was his custom to go to the synagogue on the Sabbath; and the congregation which met there had been familiar with him from his childhood, when he went with his supposed father, Joseph. The rabbi, or ruler, could not but have known him well. These rulers of the synagogue had a certain power of both trying and scourging heretics in the place itself. They could also excommunicate them, and lay a curse upon them; and Jesus knew that they would not be averse to exercising their power. But now he went to his accustomed place, looking round with a tender yearning of his heart towards them all; from those who sat conspicuously in the chief seats, to the hesitating, inquisitive villager, seldom seen in the congregation, who crept in at the door to see what was going on.

For all the people of Nazareth must have been filled with curiosity that day. Their townsman had become famous; and they longed to see him,

and to witness some miracle wrought by him. Almost all had spoken to him at one time or another; many had been brought up with him, and had been taught by the same schoolmaster. They had never thought of him as being different from themselves, except perhaps that no man could bring an evil word against him; a stupendous difference indeed, but not one that would win him much favor. Yet here he was among them again, after a year's absence or so, and throughout all the land, even in Jerusalem itself, he was everywhere known as the Prophet of Nazareth.

When the time came for the Scriptures to be read, Jesus, either called by the minister, or rising of his own accord, stood up to read. It must have been what all the congregation wished for. The low platform near the middle of the building was the best place for all to see him; their eyes were fastened upon him, and their satisfaction was still greater when he sat down to teach them from the words he had just read. They were astonished at the graciousness of his words and manner, and before he could say more than, "This day is this Scripture fulfilled," they began whispering to one another, "Is not this Joseph's son?"

There is nothing strange or unnatural in this conduct, nor indeed anything very blamable. It is precisely what would take place among ourselves now under the same circumstances. Jesus was grieved, though we cannot suppose him to have been disappointed. He knew they wanted to see him do something like what he had done in Capernaum. His sinless life had been neither a sign nor a wonder to them; so blind were they, and so hard of heart. But if he would do some astonishing work they would believe in him. "No prophet is accepted in his own country," he said, and leaving the verses he was about to explain to them, he went on to remind them that both Elijah and Elisha, their wonder-working prophets of olden times, had passed over Jewish sufferers to bestow their help on Gentiles. They could not miss seeing the application. If they rejected him, he would turn to the Gentiles.

A sudden and violent fury seized upon all who were in the synagogue. This threat came from the carpenter's son! They rose up with one accord to thrust him out of the village. As they passed along the streets the whole population would join them, and their madness growing stronger, they hurried him towards a precipice near the town, that they might cast him down headlong. But his brethren and disciples were there, and surely among the people of Nazareth he had some friends who would protect him from so shocking a death at the hands of his townsmen. He passed

through the angry crowd, and went his way over the green hills, which not long before had seemed to promise him rest and shelter from his bitter foes. He had been accused of breaking the Sabbath seven days ago; who was breaking the Sabbath now? The full time was come for all this formalism of worship to be swept away, and for Christ to proclaim himself Lord also of the Sabbath. Did Jesus linger on the brow of that eastern hill looking down upon the village which nestled at the foot of the cliff? So quiet it lay there, as if no tumult could ever enter into it. The little valley, green and fresh in the cool spring-time, was bright with flowers, like a garden amid the mountains. He had loved this narrow glen as only children can love the spot where they first grow conscious of the beauty of the world around them. Here his small hands had plucked his first lilies, more gorgeously apparelled than Solomon in all his glory. Here he had seen for the first time the red flush in the morning sky, and the rain-clouds rising out of the west, and had felt the south wind blow upon his face. Upon yonder housetops he had watched the sparrows building; and upon these mountains he had considered the ravens. The difference between now and then pressed heavily upon him; and as he wept over Jerusalem, he may have wept over Nazareth. No place on earth could be the same to him; and when he lost sight of it behind the brow of the hill, he went on sadly and sorrowfully towards Capernaum.

CHAPTER VII.

Capernaum.

THOUGH Galilee was somewhat larger than Judæa, it was in reality but a small province, not more than seventy miles in length, or thirty in breadth. This again was divided into Upper and Lower Galilee; the latter called Galilee of the Gentiles. The district in which Jesus worked most of his miracles, and went preaching from town to town, was very small indeed, a circuit of a few miles tending south and west of Capernaum, which for a short time now became his home. This part of Galilee is a lovely country, abounding in flowers and birds; and at his time it was thickly populated, with small towns or villages lying near one another, and farm-houses occupying every favorable situation. The lake or sea of Galilee is about thirteen miles long, six broad, and all the western shore was fringed with villages and hamlets. Nowhere could Jesus have met with a more

busy stir of life. Not only Jews dwelt in this region, but many Gentiles of all nations, especially the Roman and Greek. His ministry in Judæa, if the Pharisees had suffered him to remain in Judæa, would not have been so widely beneficial as in this province, where the people were less in bondage to Jewish customs and ritualism.

It is at this point that Matthew, Mark, and Luke alike begin the history of our Lord's work. What we have so far read has been recorded for us in John's gospel alone, with the exception of the visit to Nazareth, which we learn from Luke. Jesus had already some friends and believers in Capernaum. There was the nobleman whose son he had healed several weeks before. There were Andrew and Peter, to whom he had been pointed out by John the Baptist as the Lamb of God. It was quickly noised abroad that Jesus of Nazareth was come to the town, and multitudes flocked together, though it was no holy day, to hear the words he had to teach them from God. They found him upon the shore of the lake, and in order that all might see and hear him, he entered into a boat belonging to Peter, and asked him to push out a little from the bank. It was early in the morning of the day after he had been thrust out of his own village; and now, sitting in the boat with a great multitude of eager listeners pressing down to the water's edge, he spoke to them the gracious words which the people of Nazareth would not hear.

The sermon was soon over, for the listeners were working men, and had their trades to follow. Jesus then bade Peter to put out into the deep waters, and let down his net for a draught. Peter, who must have heard of the miracles Jesus wrought, though he had never seen one, seems to have obeyed without expecting much success. But the net enclosed so many fishes that it began to break, and his own boat, as well as that belonging to his partners, John and James, became dangerously full. No sooner had Peter reached the shore, where Jesus was still standing, than, terrified at his supernatural power, he fell at his feet, crying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." "Follow me," answered Jesus, "and I will make you fishers of men." Andrew and Peter immediately forsook all to attach themselves closely to Jesus; and the same morning John and James left their father Zebedee for the same purpose.

The next Sabbath day, which was probably not a weekly but a legal Sabbath, coming earlier than the end of the week, Jesus entered the synagogue at Capernaum with his band of followers, four of whom were well known in the town. The synagogue here was a much larger and more

imposing place than the one at Nazareth; and no doubt it would be filled with a congregation as crowded and attentive. Whilst Jesus was teaching them, an unlooked-for interruption came, not this time from the fury of his listeners, but from the outcry of a poor man possessed of a devil, who had come in with the congregation. Jesus rebuked the evil spirit, and the man was cast down in the midst of the synagogue in convulsions, with the people crowding round to help. But when the devil had come out of him the man himself was uninjured and in his right mind. Such a miracle, in such a place, spread far and wide, and with great swiftness, for all who had seen it wrought would be eager to speak of it.

At noon Jesus went with Peter to his house for the usual mid-day meal. Here he healed the mother of Peter's wife of a great fever so thoroughly that, feeling neither languor nor weakness, she arose and waited upon them. In the afternoon probably he went to the synagogue service again, to be listened to more eagerly than ever.

We can imagine the stir there would be throughout Capernaum that afternoon. Fevers were very prevalent in the spring and autumn, and it is not likely that Peter's mother was the only sufferer. There was no one there as yet to cavil at miracles being worked on the Sabbath-day; still the people waited until the sun was set, and then in the brief twilight a long procession threaded the streets to the house where Jesus was known to be, until all the city was gathered about the door. And as the light faded in the clear sky, a number of little twinkling lamps would be kindled in the narrow street, lighting up the pale sickly faces of the patients who were waiting for the great Physician to come by. We see him passing from one group to another, missing not one of the sufferers, and surely saying some words of comfort or warning to each one on whom he laid his healing hand—words that would dwell in their memories forever. All had faith in him, and all were cured of whatsoever disease they had.

It must have been late before this was over, and the crowd dispersed to their homes. It seems as though our Lord, after this busy day of active ministry and untiring sympathy, was unable to sleep; for, rising a great while before the dawn, he sought the freshness of the cool night air and the quiet of a lonely place, where he could pray, or rather speak to his Father unseen and unheard. He trod softly through the silent streets, lately so full of stir, and made his way to some quiet spot on the shore of the lake, pondering, it may be, over the strange contrasts in his life, his rejection by the Nazarenes, and the enthusiastic reception of him by the city of Capernaum.

As soon as it was day, however, the grateful people, discovering that he was not in Peter's house, urged his disciples to lead them to the place where he had found a brief repose. The disciples would probably require little urging, for this was the homage they expected their Master to receive. They came in multitudes, beseeching him to tarry with them; for, like Nicodemus, they knew him to be a teacher from God, by the miracles he had done. This host of friends crowding about him to prevent him from departing from them must have given him a moment of great gladness. But he could not stay with them, for he must go to preach the kingdom of God in other cities also, and if he found faith there, to perform the same wonderful and tender miracles he had wrought in Capernaum.

For the next few days Jesus, with five or six disciples, passed from village to village on the western coast of the lake, and in the plain of Gennesaret, a lovely and fertile tract of land, six or seven miles long, and five wide, surrounded by the mountains which fall back from the shore of the lake to encircle it. It was thickly covered with small towns and villages, lying so near to one another that the rumor of his arrival brought the inhabitants of all the cities to any central point where they heard that he was staying. Herod had built a city at the south of the plain and called it Tiberias, after the Roman emperor; but probably our Lord never entered its streets, though all who desired to see and hear him could readily find an opportunity in the neighboring villages. It was in one of these places that a leper, hopeless as his case seemed, determined to cast himself upon the compassion of this mighty prophet. No leper had been healed since the days of Naaman the Syrian; yet so wonderful were the miracles wrought by Jesus, so well known, and so well authenticated, that the man did not doubt his power. "If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean," he cried. He soon discovered that Christ's tenderness was as great as his power. He touched him; and immediately the sufferer was cleansed. The leper noised it abroad so much, that Jesus was compelled to hold himself somewhat aloof from the town, and keep nearer to the wild and barren mountains, where the plain was less densely peopled, until a day or two before the Sabbath he returned to Capernaum, at the northern extremity of the plain. During those few days his journeyings had been confined to a very limited space, the beautiful but small plain of Gennesaret, with its thick population and numerous villages, where he could teach many people, and perform many miracles with no loss of time in taking long journeys.

During the week Capernaum had been in a fever of excitement. It was

quite practicable for many of the inhabitants to go out three or four miles to the spot where Jesus was, for the day, and return at night with the story of what he was doing. The excitement had not been lessened by the arrival of a party of Pharisees from Jerusalem itself, who were openly unfriendly to the Galilean prophet and his new doctrines. The Galileans naturally looked up to the priesthood at Jerusalem, especially to the Sanhedrim, as the great authorities upon religious points. There were, moreover, plenty of Pharisees in Capernaum, as in every Jewish town, who readily took up the opinions of these Pharisees from Judæa, and joined them eagerly in forming a party against Jesus and his innovations. No doubt they discussed the miracle wrought in their own synagogue on the first Sabbath day that Jesus was there; and were the more zealous to condemn him, because none of them had seen the sin of it before it was pointed out by their keener and more orthodox brethren from Jerusalem.

No sooner, then, was Jesus known to be in the house at Capernaum than there collected such a crowd that there was no room to receive them; no, not so much as about the door. But some of the Pharisees had made good their entrance, and were sitting by cavilling and criticising in the midst of his disciples. At this time the friends of a paralytic man who were not able to bring him into the presence of Jesus, carried him to the flat roof of a neighboring house, and so reaching the place where he sat to teach all who could get within hearing, they took up the loose boards of the roof and let down their friend before him. Jesus, pausing in his discourse, said first to him, "Thy sins are forgiven thee!" words that filled the Pharisees with horror, yet with secret satisfaction. "Who is this?" they say to one another; "who can forgive sins but God alone?" "You cannot see that his sins are forgiven," answered Jesus, "but I will give you a sign which you can see. It is easy to *say*, Thy sins be forgiven; but I say unto thee, O man, arise, and take up thy couch, and go into thine house." Even the Pharisees, the less bitter Pharisees of Galilee at least, were silenced by this, and were for once touched with fear of this Son of man, who had power on earth to forgive sins. They glorified God, saying, "We have seen strange things to-day."

But the day was not ended. Jesus, as his custom was, went down to the shore, where he could teach greater numbers than in the narrow streets. As he was passing along he saw a tax-collector sitting in his booth gathering tolls for the hated Roman conquerors. Such a person was singularly offensive to all Jews, but especially so to the Pharisees, who looked upon publi-



"BUT A CERTAIN SAMARITAN HAD COMPASSION ON HIM."—LUKE 10 : 33.



"YOUNG MAN, I SAY UNTO THEE, ARISE."—LUKE 7:14.

cans as the most vicious and degraded of men. Mark tells us this man was the son of Alpheus, or Cleophas, the uncle of Jesus by his marriage with Mary, his mother's sister. If so, he was a reprobate son, probably disowned by all his family, to whom he was a sorrow and disgrace. The presence of Jesus and his brethren in Capernaum must have been a trial to him, bringing back to mind the days of their happy boyhood together in Nazareth, and making him feel keenly the misery and ignominy of the present. But now Jesus stands opposite his booth, looks him in the face, not angrily but tenderly, and he hears him say, "Levi, follow me!" And immediately he arose, left all, and followed him.

The same evening, Levi, or Matthew as he was afterwards called, gave a supper at his own house to Jesus and his disciples; and, no doubt with our Lord's permission, invited many publicans like himself to come and meet him and hear his teaching. The Pharisees could not let such a circumstance pass uncriticised. For their part, their religion forbade them eating even with the common people, and here was the prophet eating with publicans and sinners. This was a fresh offence; and Jesus answered only by saying, "They that are whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." No defence was offered, and no excuse made. But there was a sad sarcasm in his reply which must have stung the consciences of some of them. Were they the righteous, whom he could not call into the kingdom of God?

CHAPTER VIII.

Foes from Jerusalem.

AS spectators at Matthew's feast were two of John's disciples, who had been sent by their master with a strange question, "Art thou he that should come, or look we for another?" John had now been imprisoned for some time in a gloomy dungeon on the desolate shores of the Dead sea. His disciples, who were inclined to be somewhat jealous of the younger prophet, had brought him word of the miracles wrought by Jesus, but wrought upon the Sabbath day in direct antagonism to the Pharisees, and, as it seemed, to the law of Moses. The very first miracle at Cana of Galilee was altogether opposed to the austere habits of John, who had never

tasted wine. There was something perplexing and painful to him in these reports; and he had nothing else to do in his prison than brood over them. Was it possible that he could have made any mistake—could have fallen under any delusion in proclaiming his cousin Jesus as the promised Messiah? Had he truly heard a voice from heaven? Could this be indeed the Son of God, who mingled with common people at their feasts, and visited Samaritans? He, who all his life long had lived in the open air, free from even social restraints, was becoming morbid in his captivity. It grew necessary to him at last to send his disciples to Jesus for some comforting and reassuring message.

When John's disciples came to Jesus, they seem to have found him feasting with the publicans—a circumstance utterly foreign to their master's custom. They felt themselves more akin to the Pharisees, and asked him, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not?" Jesus answered them that he was the bridegroom of whom John himself had spoken, and that as long as the bridegroom was with them they could not mourn. But the days would come when he should be taken away, and then they would fast. He would have no pretence at mourning or fasting to be seen of men. He would have no acting. These were days of joy, and it was meet to make merry and be glad when a brother who had been lost was found. Matthew was their brother, and he was restored to them; how could they mourn?

But Jesus kept John's disciples with him for a short time, that they might see how miracles were his everyday work, not merely a wonder performed in the synagogues on a Sabbath day, before sending them back to the poor prisoner in Herod's fortress. The next day was a Sabbath. The Pharisees kept closely beside Jesus, following him even when he and his disciples were walking through the fields of standing corn, possibly after the synagogue service, but before the Sabbath was ended. It was the second week of April, and the grain was growing heavy in the ear; perhaps a few ears of it were ripe, for in the lowlands about Capernaum it ripened earlier than in the uplands of Galilee. The disciples plucked the ears of corn, rubbing them in their hands with the careless ease of men who thought it no harm, and who had forgotten the captious Pharisees beside them. The latter accused them sharply of breaking the law, and aroused Jesus to defend them by giving them instances from their own Scriptures and observances of the law of Moses being broken without blame. Then, pausing to give more weight to his last words, he added, "The Son of man is Lord also

of the Sabbath." He did not acknowledge their authority to make laws for the Sabbath. Nay, more, he claimed to be Lord of it himself.

Without doubt this answer deepened the enmity and opposition of the Pharisees; nor can we wonder at it. There was now no middle course they could take. If they acknowledged Jesus to be a prophet sent from God, they must own him as Christ, the Messiah, with a Divine authority over their laws and traditions. He was setting these at defiance, asserting himself to be Lord of the temple and Lord of the Sabbath. John had made no such claims, though it was well known that his birth had been foretold by the angel Gabriel to Zacharias, his father, when he was ministering in the Holy Place. But John's career was at an end; and if Jesus was not taken out of the way he would turn the world upside down, and the Romans would bring them into utter subjection. Both religion and patriotism demanded that they should seek his death.

A day or two after this weekly Sabbath came a legal Sabbath, one of the holy days among the Jews. Jesus was in the synagogue; and there also, probably in a conspicuous place as if to catch his eye, sat a man with a withered hand. It seems almost as though he had been found and posted there in order to test Jesus. The Pharisees were growing eager to multiply accusations against him before they returned to Jerusalem for the approaching feast of the passover. Even they might feel that the sin of plucking ears of corn was not a very grave one. Here was a man for Jesus to heal. The case was not an urgent one; to-morrow would do as well as to-day for restoring the withered hand. But Jesus will show to them that any act of love and mercy is lawful on the Sabbath day, is, in fact, the most lawful thing to do. God causes his sun to shine, and his rain to fall, on that day as on any other. He looked round upon them all with their hard faces set against him; and he was grieved in his heart. Then, with the authority of a prophet, he bade the man stand up and stand forward in the midst of them. If they had been secretly plotting against him in bringing the man there, he was not afraid to face them openly. "Is it lawful on the Sabbath day to do good or to do evil? to save life or to destroy it?" he asked. But the Pharisees from Jerusalem could not answer the question; and when he healed the man in the sight of all the people, they were filled with madness.

Possibly they had reckoned upon the miracle failing, for by this time it was understood that only those who believed in the power of Jesus could be healed, and they had not expected this man to have faith in him. It

seems that they left the synagogue at once, and though it was a Sabbath day they held a council against him how they might destroy him. They even entered into an alliance with the Herodians, their own opponents. For the Herodians favored the adoption of Roman laws and customs, against which the Pharisees had formed themselves into a distinct sect. But they were now ready to join any party, or follow any plan, so that they might destroy this common enemy.

It became impossible for Jesus to remain in Capernaum, and he left it immediately, probably the same evening, withdrawing to some mountain near the lake, where he continued all night in prayer to God. To a nature like his this bitter and pitiless enmity, aroused by acts of goodness only, must have been a terrible burden. They were his own people, not the heathen, who were hunting him to death—men who all their lives long had heard and read of God, his heavenly Father, who offered sacrifices to him, and gave tithes to his temple of all that they possessed. They knew, or ought to have known, what they were doing. There was no excuse of ignorance for them. All night he prayed, with the bright stars glittering above him in the blue sky, and the fresh breeze from the lake and the mountain, laden with the scent of flowers, breathing softly on his face. No sounds near him save the quiet sounds of night on the mountain side, and the wail of the curlew over the lake. This was better than sleep to him; and as the day dawned he was ready once more to meet his disciples, and to face the numerous duties coming with the sunrise.

His first act was to call his disciples to him, and from them he chose twelve to form for the future a group of attached followers and friends, who would go with him wherever he went and learn his message, so as to carry it to other lands when his own voice was silenced. Him his foes might and would destroy; but his message from God must not perish with him. Philip was one of them, he who had been with him from the first; and John, the youngest and most loved, who sat nearest to him at meal times, and who treasured up every word that fell from his lips, so that, when he came to write the history of his Lord, so many memories crowded to his brain of things Jesus had said and done, that he cried in loving despair, "All the world could not contain the books that might be written!"

Two at least, if not three, of our Lord's own family were amongst the chosen twelve: James, his cousin, of whom it is said he was so like Jesus as sometimes to be mistaken for him; and Judas not Iscariot, who, like the other kinsmen of Christ, asked him, even on the last night that he lived,

"Why wilt thou manifest thyself to us, and not unto the world?" Levi, if he was the son of Alpheus, was a third cousin, and each one wrote for us a portion of the New Testament. How much might these three have told us of his early life in Nazareth if no restraint had been laid upon them!

Then there was Peter, always the leader among the apostles, impatient and daring, so eager that he must always meet his Lord, and not wait for him to come to him; walking upon the sea, or casting himself into it to reach more quickly the shore where Jesus stood, exclaiming rapturously at one time, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," and at another, with oaths and curses, repeating, "I know not the man." Of the rest we know little, save one dark name, read amidst the blackest shadows of the past. Why did Jesus call Judas Iscariot? Why did he make him a familiar friend, in whom he trusted? They went up together into the house of God, and took sweet counsel together. He gave and received from Jesus the kiss of friendship. To him was intrusted the wealth of the little band, and every trifling want of his Master's he had to supply, an office that brought him into the closest intimacy with him. Why was he chosen for this service? Was he the eldest amid this company of young men? a wise, shrewd man, cautious and prudent, where others might have been rash or forgetful? We do not know; but whilst Peter, James, and John followed their Lord into the chamber of Jairus' little daughter and up to the Mount of Transfiguration, Judas had the bag, and bore what was put therein.

CHAPTER IX.

At Nain.

IT was broad daylight now, no time for secret assassination, and, surrounded by his twelve devoted friends, Jesus returned to Capernaum, where his mother would probably be waiting in a state of anxious restlessness. As soon as it was known that he was entering the town, some of the rulers of the synagogue came to meet him, beseeching him to work a miracle in favor of a Roman centurion, whose servant was likely to die. The most bigoted amongst them could not deny that Jesus of Nazareth did many mighty works; and they could not decline to offer this petition to him when the centurion, who had built them a synagogue, commissioned them with it. The servant was healed without Jesus going to the house, the

centurion sending to say that he was not worthy that the Lord should enter under his roof. Even Jesus marvelled at the man's faith, and though he had just chosen twelve of his most trustworthy disciples, he cried, "I have not found so great a faith; no, not in Israel."

The next day, Jesus, followed by many disciples, both men and women, went out to visit the towns and villages lying westward of the hills which enclose the plain of Gennesaret. As he passed along his company grew in numbers, for everywhere had men heard of him, and those who had sick friends brought them out to the roadside that they might be healed. This day his journey was a long one, and he could not tarry by the way, except to work some such loving miracle. He was to rest in the little village of Nain that night; a place he knew quite well, for it was only five miles from Nazareth, and probably he had some friends there. Much people had gathered around him when he trod the steep path up to Nain; but before they reached the gate another multitude appeared coming out as if to meet them, yet there was no shout of welcome; instead there were cries and wailings for one whom they were carrying forth to the tombs outside the village.

Possibly Jesus knew both the young man who was dead and his mother. He hastened to her side, and said, "Weep not." Then he touched the bier, and those who were carrying it stood still. What was the prophet about to do? He could heal any kind of sickness, but this was death, not sickness. It was a corpse bound up, and swathed with grave-clothes; the eyes forever blinded to the light, and the ears too deaf to be unloosed. An awful silence must have fallen upon the crowd; and they heard a calm, quiet voice saying, "Young man, I say unto thee, Arise!" He spoke simply, in a few words only; but the quiet voice pierced through all the sealed deafness of death, and the dead sat up, and began to speak. Then Jesus, perhaps with his own hands freeing him from the grave-clothes, gave him back to his mother. A thrill of fear ran through all the crowd, and as they thronged into Nain some said, "A great prophet is risen up among us," and others, "God has visited his people."

It has been thought that here, at Nain, dwelt Simon the Pharisee, who now invited Jesus to his house to eat meat with him. He was not one of our Lord's enemies from Jerusalem, but merely a member of the sect, which was numerous throughout all Judæa and Galilee. He probably regarded Jesus as a workingman from the neighboring village of Nazareth, though now considered a prophet by the people: and he did not offer to

him the courteous attentions he would have shown to a more honored guest. After his long and dusty walk Jesus sat down to Simon's table without the usual refreshment of having his feet washed, and his head anointed with oil.

But this slight, passed over by Jesus, was more than atoned for by a woman, who, coming in to see the supper with other townspeople, stood behind him at his feet, and began to wash them with her tears, and to wipe them with her long hair, kissing them again and again. Caring little who was watching her in her passion of repentance and love, she brought an alabaster box of precious ointment, and poured the costly contents upon the feet she had washed and kissed. Yet the prophet seemed to take no notice of her and her touch. But Simon, the host, said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner." The sinful woman's unheeded touch was more conclusive against him than all his miracles were for him. Simon did not have her thrust from his house; but there was a secret satisfaction in his heart at finding out that Joseph's son after all was not prophet enough to know who she was.

Did not Jesus know? Had he not felt every tear that had fallen upon his feet, and the touch of the trembling lips which dared not speak to him? He spoke a short, simple parable to Simon, and asked him a question, the answer to which condemned the self-righteous Pharisee. And then, turning to the weeping woman, he said, "Thy sins, which are many, are forgiven; thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." Those who sat about him began then with their old murmur, "Who is this that forgiveth sins also?" But he gave them no sign this time. No sign could be greater than the miracle wrought that day. As Jesus himself said in one of his parables, "They will not be persuaded, no, not if one rise from the dead."

CHAPTER X.

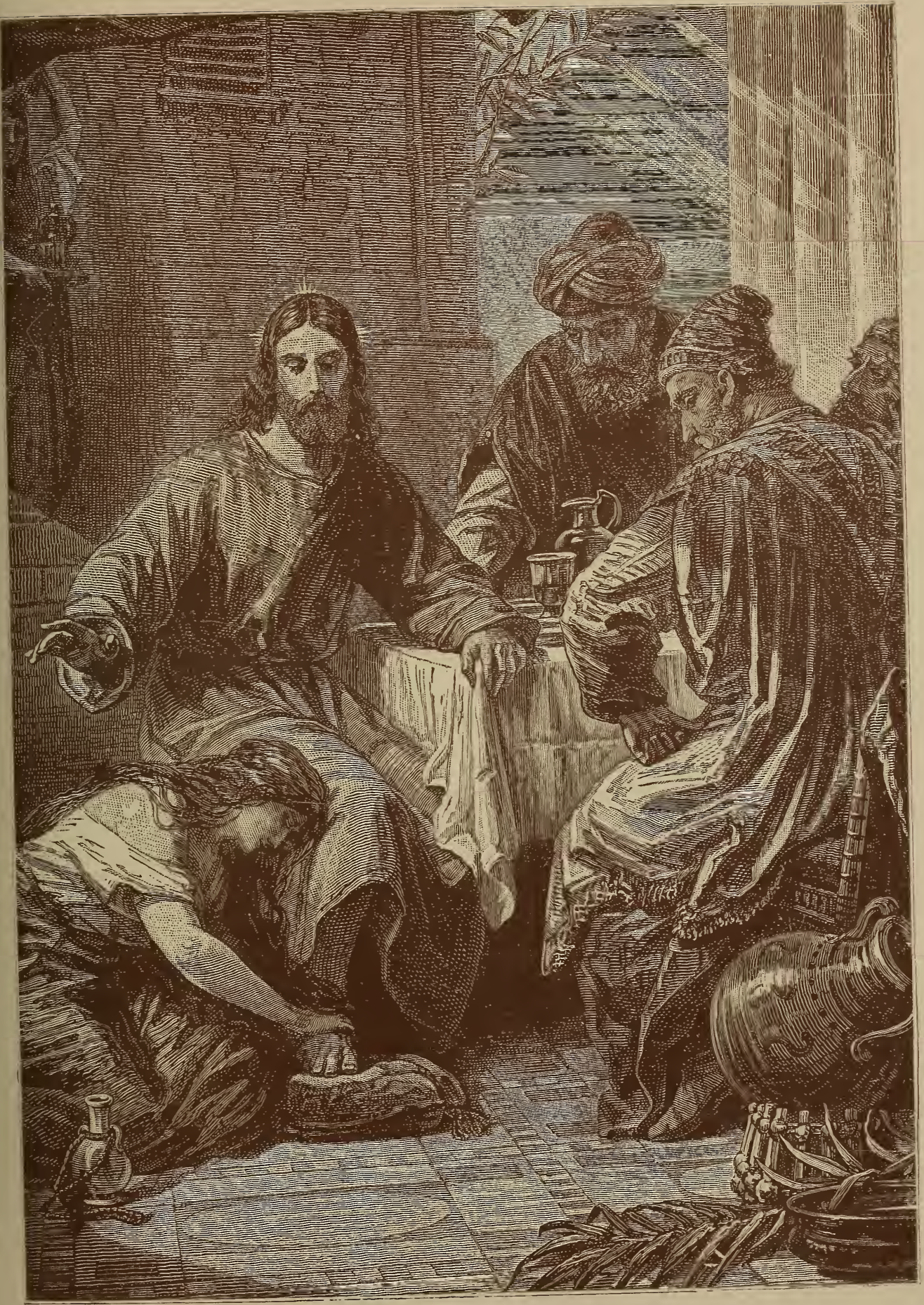
Mighty Works.

LEAVING Nain, Jesus, with a large number of followers, including the apostles, and certain women who ministered to them of their property, passed through all the villages of that neighborhood, gradually working their way back to Capernaum. It was some time during this

week that Jesus dismissed the disciples of John the Baptist, bidding them tell him all they had seen and heard, and adding to his message a gentle reproof, "Blessed is he whosoever shall not be offended in me." He knew how many were already offended; and how the cause of offence must take deeper and deeper root, until the scandal of the cross came to eclipse every dream of glory in his followers. The message thus sent to John in his prison, with the marvellous tidings of the signs and wonders wrought, and the report of the new doctrines, must have greatly strengthened and comforted the prophet during the short time that remained to him of life.

The circuit from Nain to Capernaum, though short, was one of great exertion and fatigue; yet when they reached the latter town, and were in need of rest, so great a multitude came together again immediately, that they could not so much as eat bread. Jesus could not attend to his own needs, whilst others were crying to him for help, or crowding round him for instruction. His meat was to do the will of him that sent him, and to finish his work; and the bitter enmity of the Pharisees warned him that what he had to do must be done quickly. But his relations thought it was quite time to interfere with this self-forgetful zeal, and they sought to take hold of him, saying, "He is beside himself." They did not yet believe in him, for they could not get over the impression made upon them by his homely simple life amongst them, when he worked at a trade like themselves, apparently unconscious of being different from them. Probably their words only meant that he was carried into extremes by his burning enthusiasm. But the Pharisees from Jerusalem, who were still hanging about him, caught up the hasty words, and bitterly exaggerated them. "He hath Beelzebub," they cried, "and by the prince of the devils he casteth out devils." Jesus then called them to him, bidding the crowd make way. It was an extraordinary scene. There stood the powerful enemies from the chief city and the chief priests of the nation, strong in their reputation for religion and for righteousness, face to face with the young but well-known prophet of Nazareth, who boldly and solemnly in the hearing of all the people warned them of the sin they were committing, blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, and declared that if it was persisted in there was no forgiveness for it.

In the meantime his mother, whose spirit could not be as brave for her son as his was for God, came to the outskirts of the throng with some of his cousins, and sent a message to him, which reached his ears as he finished his warning to the Pharisees. "Behold," they said, "thy mother and thy



CHRIST AND MARY MAGDALENE.
"THY SINS ARE FORGIVEN."—LUKE 7 : 48.



"BEHOLD, A SOWER WENT FORTH TO SOW."—MATT. 13 : 3.

brethren stand without, desiring to see thee." It was no moment for such a message to come. His kinsmen, though we cannot think his mother could have taken a part in it, had given occasion to the Pharisees to say that he had a devil; and it was necessary that all should know that he owned no authority in them, and could not submit to any interference. Dearly as he loved his mother, even she must cease to look upon him as a son whom she might command. Solemnly and emphatically he pointed to his apostles, and to the women who had come into the city weary and hungry as himself. "Behold my mother and my brethren," he said, "for whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother."

The remainder of the day was one of ceaseless activities. So many persons came in from other towns that Jesus, as his custom was, led them down to some convenient spot on the shore, and there entered into a boat, so as to be seen and heard by all. He taught them by parables, by many parables, and by nothing else than parables; a charming and fascinating mode of teaching to these imaginative eastern people, who carried them home in their minds to ponder over, and find out their hidden meaning. There was no need for them to be learned in the law: the common occupations of every day served as lessons for them; sowing their seed, or mixing their meal with yeast, was the symbol of the kingdom of heaven which had come among them.

At last the sun sank behind the western hills, and evening closed in. The disciples sent away the crowds from their exhausted Master. One of his hearers, a scribe even, for he had won some friends among the ranks of his foes, came to him, saying, "Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." Jesus was weary in body, and depressed in spirit. Capernaum lay there close by, but it was no safe place for him to spend the night in. He had already decided that it was better to cross over the lake to the eastern side, where his enemies might not care to follow him; and he answered the scribe in those mournful and most memorable words, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head." The sky was darkening, and the stillness of night coming on; the birds were singing their last songs; and the wild beasts were creeping forth out of their dens which had sheltered them all day. But for him there was no place of rest, save the deck of the boat; no bed, except a pillow, on which his aching head could lie. Yet perhaps the scribe followed him: for a little fleet of fishermen's boats sailed out after him into

the gathering darkness, following the bark, in which the Master was soon sleeping, for very weariness, near the helmsman who was steering for the eastern shores.

The lake of Galilee, like all inland lakes, is subject to sudden storms of wind, which sweep down the ravines between the mountains with great force. Such a gale came on this night with so much fury, that even those disciples who, as fishermen, were quite at home on the water, were filled with terror. The eager followers in the other boats must have been still more alarmed as the waves beat over them, and filled their small vessels. No one but Jesus could have been asleep, but he slept soundly ; and it was not till they called him that he awoke. "Master," they cried, "carest thou not that we perish?" Yes, he cared. He cared even for their fears ; and though there was no danger of their perishing whilst he was with them in the boat, he arose, and rebuked the wind and the sea, and immediately there was a great calm. Probably he fell asleep again ; but all the crews of that little company of boats were exceedingly afraid, asking one another, "What manner of man is this, hungry and thirsty, and worn out with weariness like ourselves, yet even the wind and the sea obey him?"

The early morning found them on the eastern shore near Gergasa, which was in the tetrarchy of Philip, a just and moderate prince, very different from his brother Herod, who ruled over Galilee. Here, at least, Jesus might expect to find shelter and rest. But no sooner had he landed than a terrible demoniac, whose dwelling was among the tombs near the town, rushed down to the shore to meet him. So fierce and violent was he that no man dare pass that way, and always, day and night, the unhappy wretch was crying and cutting himself with stones. Jesus at once commanded the legion of evil spirits to come out of the man ; but gave them permission to enter into a herd of swine that were feeding near at hand ; upon which the whole herd, in number about two thousand, ran violently down a steep place into the lake, and were choked in the waters. Those who kept them fled into Gergasa, and the inhabitants immediately came out to see who it was that had done this mischief. But upon finding their fierce and powerful countryman clothed, and in his right mind, they were afraid ; and learning by what miracle he had been restored, they confined their resentment at their loss to, beseeching Jesus to quit their coast.

Wet and hungry as he was, Jesus returned to the boat, bidding the poor man, who wished to follow him, rather to go home to his friends, and tell them what great things the Lord had done for him. Though the Gerga-

senes would not receive him, he would leave them a witness to tell of his love and power. And now, driven away from that inhospitable coast, he returned towards Capernaum, giving up the hope of a few days' rest, far away from his knot of enemies, and his thoughtless crowd of followers.

No sooner was it known that his boat was on the shore than one of the rulers of the synagogue hastened down to him. His little daughter was lying at the point of death, and there remained no hope but in Jesus. He went at once with the father; yet he paused on the way to heal a poor woman who touched in secret the hem of his garment as he passed by. She had been suffering as many years as the child had lived, and Jesus could not neglect her for a ruler's daughter, though he should gain a powerful friend by it. There was a great tumult about the house when they reached it; the child was just dead, had died while Jesus lingered on the way to heal this poor woman, who had spent all that she had on physicians. "She is not dead, but sleepeth," he said; and they laughed him to scorn, knowing she was dead. Into her chamber he passed, suffering no one to go in but her father and mother, and his three most favored disciples; and taking the girl's hand into his own, he called to her, and her spirit came back again over the mysterious threshold it had just crossed.

But Jesus charged her parents that they should tell no man what was done; he charged them straitly. He would not have this young and happy life burdened with the weight of such a mystery; if possible the girl herself was not to know it. The widow's son at Nain might bear the burden, and meet the curious eye bent upon him, and answer as he could the eager questions asked about that other life of which he had caught a glimpse. But this child, just on the verge of happy girlhood, must be spared it all. "She is not dead, but sleepeth," he said, and he called her back to her place on earth as one who had only been wrapt in a deeper slumber than is natural.

CHAPTER XI.

A Holiday in Galilee.

JESUS seems only to have entered Capernaum for the sake of Jairus; for he did not stay there; but going away immediately, he went once more to Nazareth, where some of his cousins were still living. Very probably he knew from them that his townsfolk were now ashamed of their

savage assault upon him three weeks before. Since then they had heard of his wisdom and his mighty works, especially of that one at Nain, a village within sight of their own town. They were even hoping to have their own curiosity gratified by some wonder performed among them; but they could not get over the fact that he had been a carpenter in Nazareth, and that all his relations were known by them, poor, undistinguished people, who were considered of no account. Jesus himself marvelled at their unbelief, surpassing any he had yet contended against; and he could not do any mighty work, save that he healed a few sick folk, probably poor people, who knew him better than the wiser and richer men.

From Nazareth he sent out his apostles by two and two to make a short circuit of the towns lying about before meeting him again on an appointed day near Capernaum; for it was safer to be close upon the shores of the lake, whence at any time he could seek refuge in the dominions of Philip, rather than in any of the country places from which there could be no speedy way of escape from his enemies. He himself went round the villages teaching. The district travelled over thus was a small one, and by the separation of the apostles into six parties, every village would be quickly visited. These little places lay close together, and only a central spot would be needed for the gathering of congregations; the Galileans seeming to be always ready to flock together at the first hint of any excitement.

The first news that reached Jesus, when he returned to the neighborhood of Capernaum, was that of the cruel death of his cousin, friend and forerunner, John the Baptist, whose disciples were come to bring him the tidings. The murder of their prophet must have stirred the people to deep indignation, and wounded the tender heart of Christ most keenly. But at the same time his apostles met him, full of triumph at the wonders they had themselves performed during their short separation from him. To some of them John the Baptist had been almost as dear as Jesus was now; and thus two currents of strong agitation ran counter to one another. Jesus himself felt in need of some hours of quietness in which to mourn over his loss, and to hear from his apostles what they had done and taught. But so long as they remained on the western shore of the lake there was no hope of gaining any such leisure time; and he entered into a boat with his disciples and passed over to the other side.

They landed in a solitary spot on the north of the lake, not more than three or four miles east of Capernaum, where the hills shut in a small plot of tall green grass, not yet dried up by the summer's heat. But the multi-

tudes of people from whom they had intended to escape for a little while, seeing them depart, set out on foot along the shore, and keeping the boat in sight, with its sails fluttering over the glistening water, they outwent it in speed. It was probably the day before the passover supper, which was kept at Jerusalem ; a day on which no work was done in Galilee : and thus the people gathered from every village and farm-house, and from every fishing hamlet on the shore, until when Jesus reached the desert place near Bethsaida, one of the largest crowds that could ever have collected about him, numbering five thousand men, besides women and children, were waiting to receive him.

He was filled with compassion for them, for they were as sheep having no shepherd. No doubt the tidings of John's murder in prison was fresh among them ; and our Lord knew how deeply their hearts felt the loss of such a teacher. He began to teach them in this little temple with the clear blue sky above them ; and was not weary of teaching, nor they of listening, until late in the afternoon, when his disciples asked him to send them away before nightfall. There was a lad in the crowd who had brought with him five barley loaves and two small fishes, most likely in the hope of selling them among so many persons, and pushing himself forward in the crowd, as lads are apt to do. Jesus bade the disciples bring them to him ; Judas perhaps grudging the money he was called upon to spend for such a purpose. Then he told them to make the company sit down in fifties, the tall, green grass forming couches for them on which they could rest, as in the Paschal supper they were enjoined to "sit down leaning," not standing, as if they were slaves. The command of our Lord was well understood by them ; they sat down leaning upon these natural couches as their brethren up in Jerusalem would so rest, when in a few hours they would eat the Paschal supper.

It was a suitable ending for the holiday. The sun was still shining in the west, nor when it went down was there any fear of the crowd missing the way to their homesteads, for the full moon was ready to rise beyond the eastern hills, flooding every mountain track, and every narrow village street, with its silver light. The season was the most delicious of all the year ; and the cool air from the lake was sweet and fresh, not chilly or damp. Children were there, some stealing up to the Master's feet, and may be getting a piece of bread from his hand ; their laughter and their voices mingling with the graver hum of older people. What a surprise too for the disciples as they began to understand their Master's purpose ! This was such a miracle as the Messiah was expected to perform. A table furnished in the

wilderness, as in the times of Moses, when he gave them bread from heaven to eat. What was giving sight to a few blind folk, or even raising from the dead a widow's son in a distant village, compared to this large, public, kingly miracle of feeding thousands of his followers with so small a store of provisions?

There was but one happier hour for them in the future, when they followed their Master in his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, a year later. But now as they went about among the companies, they spread the story of the wonder then being wrought, until the enthusiasm of the people outgrew all bounds. They resolved to take him by force, and make him a king, sure that thousands would now flock from all quarters to hail him as the Messiah. This was the very danger Jesus had sought carefully to avert, as it would bring him and his party into collision with the Roman government, whose soldiers were garrisoned in many parts of the country. He constrained his disciples, who were unwilling to lose this hour of promised greatness, to set sail, and go on before him, whilst he sent the multitude away. When *they* were gone, whose wishes and plans were so different from his own, he dismissed the crowds, who obeyed him the more readily as now the night was at hand, and many of them had far to go on foot.

At last, then, Jesus was alone, and, in need of rest more than ever, in need of a moment or two in which he could mourn over his friend, in need of close communion with his Father, he went up into the mountain, at the foot of which he had been laboring all day. The Easter moon shone down upon him full and clear out of the cloudless sky, and lighted up the waters of the lake in which his disciples were rowing hard against the wind to reach the point of the shore he had directed them to steer for. He saw them driven out of their course by the wind into the midst of the lake; but still he lingered on the mountain side hour after hour. Is it possible that, bowed down by the death of John, a foretaste of his agony in Gethsemane made this season of solitude one of bitterness and sorrow? Was his soul exceeding sorrowful within as he watched his faithful followers toiling on the lake apart from him? When the next passover came, the eternal parting would come, when they must sail out into the fierce storm of life alone, without him in the ship; living by the faith, of which they yet showed so little sign. Next passover! Where would they be? What loss would they have to bear then? How would they bear it?

Still he saw them tossing about on the rough moon-lit sea, until, when the fourth watch of the morning was near, he resolved to give them a proof

of his power, which, in after years, every moonlight night, and every fresh burst of life's storm, would bring to their minds. They, looking across the stormy waves, beheld him walking towards them on the sea; and they cried aloud with fear and trouble, for their Lord was coming to them strangely, in no familiar manner. Peter, bolder than the rest, attempted to go to meet him, but his courage failed, and he would have sunk but for the outstretched hand of his Master. When they entered into the boat, the wind ceased, and they, not considering the miracle of the loaves and fishes, were sore amazed within themselves, beyond measure. Their Master, possessing this marvellous power, still refused to be made a king! Their hearts, too hard yet to understand, could not perceive why he steadily opposed all such ambition.

They landed on the plain of Gennesaret, and walked northward to Capernaum, where they were met by numbers of those who had been fed in the desert the day before. It was the first day of the passover, a solemn Sabbath, and Jesus taught in the synagogue openly, and without any opposition, except the murmurs of those who were disappointed by his steady rejection of their desire to proclaim him king. His most hostile enemies, the Pharisees, were necessarily absent at the passover in Jerusalem. But from that day many of his disciples in Galilee left him, not being able to hear or rather to understand the hard sayings, and the reproaches with which he met them. "Ye seek me," he said, "because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." Their love for him was too earthy to bear the test he proposed to them, so they went back, and walked no more with him.

"Will ye also go away?" asked Jesus, sadly, of his twelve apostles. "Lord, to whom should we go?" cried Peter; "thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." "Not all," he answered; "have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Already he could point out the traitor in his little camp. Probably Judas had made himself unusually busy the day before in urging on the crowd to make him king by force. They all longed for him to assert his claims; his brethren were constantly urging him to manifest himself; John and James asked him to promise them the chief places in his kingdom; but Judas looked forward to be the treasurer of all the wealth of the Messiah King of Judæa, and no voice had been louder the day before, and no disciple so reluctant to obey, when he constrained them to set sail and leave him alone with the multitude. "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?" Judas was to live in close fellow-

ship with him for a whole year longer ; but even Christ could not cast out of him this demon of covetousness, whilst he was cherishing it in his secret heart.

CHAPTER XII.

In the North.

DURING this quiet week, with his enemies away, Jesus was busily occupied in the plain of Gennesaret and the region lying about, where, as he passed along the roads or through the streets, sick people were laid, that they might touch if it were but the hem of his garment. But this undisturbed, unopposed course of kindly healing and of teaching ended as soon as the Pharisees hastened back from Jerusalem, not willing to remain at home until they had got him into their power. They began by accusing him of setting aside the tradition of the elders—an accusation he did not deny. But he answered them sternly, calling them hypocrites, and pointing out how they set aside the commandments of God. He deeply offended them by this reply, and the old danger of dwelling in Capernaum revived in greater force. Besides this, it was well known that Herod, the murderer of John, had a great desire to see Jesus ; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, probably warning him of this danger. Herod's city, Tiberias, was on the western coast of the lake, south of the plain of Gennesaret, where Jesus had lately been journeying. It was not more than ten miles from Capernaum ; and our Lord must often have been very near it, though it does not seem that he ever entered it.

It was only a few weeks since Jesus had been compelled to quit Jerusalem and Judæa ; and now he found it needful to withdraw from the busy, crowded coasts of the lake of Galilee, and to seek the west of Galilee, where he was less known, and where he could quietly instruct his apostles, who as yet knew little of the message they were to teach when he was gone. He went farther north than he had ever travelled, to the very confines of the Holy Land, and to the shores of the Mediterranean sea, so vast and limitless, compared with the little lake of Galilee. But even here he could not be hid ; for a certain woman, no Jewess, but a Gentile, who had already become acquainted with his name, no sooner heard of him than she came, and, falling at his feet, besought him to heal her daughter, who was possessed by a devil. Jesus did so, as a recompense of her own faith, praising it, as he



THE RAISING OF THE DAUGHTER OF JAIRUS.—LUKE 8 : 54.



CHRIST FEEDING THE MULTITUDE.

"HE BLESSED, AND BROKE, AND GAVE THE LOAVES TO HIS DISCIPLES, AND THE DISCIPLES TO THE MULTITUDE."—MATT. 14 : 19.

had done the faith of the Roman centurion, no doubt to the bewilderment of his disciples, who did not yet know, what the Samaritans had known, that he was the Saviour of the world.

From this northwestern limit Jesus and his disciples, probably never staying long in the same place, made their way gradually back to the eastern shore of the lake of Galilee, where they were in the tetrarchy of Philip. The country through which they passed was still more beautiful than the more southern parts of Galilee. They journeyed under the range of Hermon, and passed the high hill of Bashan, with the upper Jordan and the waters of Merom on their left hand, in the month of May, whilst the harvest was going on. A time of rest and possible happiness. Who was there besides the chosen twelve we do not know. Where they tarried and lodged, what route they took, we do not know. But at length they reached that inhospitable coast, where once before the inhabitants had besought the Lord not to sojourn with them.

But the fierce demoniac, whom Jesus had left to bear witness of him, had changed the minds of the people with regard to a second visit from this mighty prophet. They were now willing to receive him, and they brought to him a man who was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech. He led him away from the crowd, who in this country must have been half of them heathen, with no motive influencing their coming to him save that of curiosity. For the same reason, probably, to avoid the danger and distraction of a number of curious followers, he bade the man and his friends to tell no one of his cure; but they, not at all understanding his motive, proclaimed the miracle about all that region. Great multitudes in consequence came unto him, having with them lame, the blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and he healed them all, even though many of them were heathen, as if now he would teach his disciples that the blessings he brought to earth were not to be confined to the Jewish nation. And the people glorified the God of Israel.

Three days this mixed multitude remained with Jesus. He appears to have been dwelling upon one of the mountains on the shore of the lake, sleeping in the open air, as they must have done, for it was now the early summer, and the nights were warm. On the third day, when their provisions were exhausted, he said to his disciples, "I have compassion on this multitude, and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint by the way." We often wonder how the disciples could have been so dull as to answer in the manner they did, after the feeding of the five thousand on the passover

eve. But we must remember that in the former case the crowd consisted only of Jews, to whom they considered the Messiah sent ; in this the multitude was more than half heathen, of the same race as those who had rejected Christ when he first landed on their shores. The disciples were jealous of these heathen followers, who brought discredit upon their Master among his own nation. They probably thought it impolitic for him to eat as he did with publicans and sinners, though they were at least sons of Abraham, whilst these were Gentiles, who had no part in the Messiah. More willing would even Judas have been to exhaust their little purse in buying bread than see him feed them as he had fed his own people.

But Jesus could not be influenced by any such reasons. These, like the Jews, were also as sheep without a shepherd. He repeated his miracle for them, spreading a table for them in the wilderness, as he had done for his fellow-countrymen, noticing the women and children, who were won to him by his tenderness, giving thanks to the Father of all, as though all there were his children, as well as the descendants of Abraham, his ancient friend. There seems to have been no excitement among them as there had been among the Galileans, who had wished to make him a king by force. The disciples themselves did not seek to fan any such excitement. The crowd separated at his bidding, and he passed over the lake into the near neighborhood of Magdala, a village within two miles of Tiberias, Herod's chief city. We know he had friends in Herod's household ; and during the three days he had been staying on the opposite shore he might easily have received tidings that there was no immediate danger in thus venturing into the close neighborhood of Tiberias.

But though we cannot suppose that the Pharisees from Jerusalem had remained so long in Galilee, other Pharisees, whose hostility they had aroused against Jesus, very soon discovered his return among them, and came to him with the old demand for some sign from heaven. Some Sadducees were now joined with them, a sect with still greater political power than themselves, as the high priests and their families and most of the aristocracy were at this time belonging to it, though it possessed very much less religious influence over the nation. This union of political with religious power made the danger still greater to Jesus ; and once more he was compelled to leave the western shores and seek safety in the comparatively friendly country of Philip, the tetrarch of Iturea.

On the eastern banks of the upper Jordan, close upon its fall into the lake of Galilee, still in Philip's dominions, stood Bethsaida ; and our Lord,

who was now retracing his steps to the north, where he had before spent some time afar from his enemies, came to this place on his way. A blind man was brought to him, and he took him by the hand and led him out of the town to restore to him his sight; then bade him neither to go back to the town, nor to tell it to any of the townsfolk. He wished to avoid, if possible, any stir in this place, where he was so well known; for it was not more than an hour's walk to Capernaum, which he had not visited since the Pharisees had returned to it, after the passover. Almost as a fugitive now he was passing through a town where he had done many of his mighty works, and many of whose inhabitants had eaten of the food he had multiplied by miracle in the wilderness. Already his heart was heavy with the woe he afterwards pronounced against it. Here he must hide his miracle of restoring sight to one blind man, where hundreds had been witnesses of greater works than this.

Heavy-hearted, his disciples following him with bewildered spirits and disappointed hopes, Jesus went on northwards to the villages near Cæsarea Philippi, a summer city, which Philip the tetrarch had built amongst the hills of Hermon, close to the easternmost source of the Jordan, where a number of rivulets form first a small pool of water and then a stream, rushing through the thickets on the hill-side. It was the loveliest spot whither the wanderings of Jesus had led him. The sultry heat of the lake of Galilee was here exchanged for the cool shadows of groves of trees, and its sandy shores for a carpet of turf. Numberless brooks wound through the fields, scarcely to be dried up by the summer sun; for far above them rose the snowy peak of Hermon, glistening against the burning sky. It was such a place as he must have delighted in, if his heart had been less wounded by enmity, and his spirit less clouded by the sure end which he saw coming nearer and nearer upon him.

He did not here hide himself, as he had done near Capernaum. He called the people about him—the summer crowds, who had probably come north from the hotter atmosphere of the lower lands—and asked them, among other teaching, “What shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?” a solemn question for these holiday-makers to consider. It was here that Peter declared emphatically that he believed his Master to be the Messiah, the Son of the living God, in spite of all his own disappointment, and the mysterious deeds and sayings of his Lord. But when Jesus proceeded to speak more plainly to his apostles of the certain death which must be the end of the enmity which he excited, Peter

could not bear it. He knew that as the Messiah his Lord had power to subdue his foes; nay, the prophecies declared that so should the Messiah act. It seemed to him so extraordinary a contradiction, not only of his own hopes, but of all the prophets had said concerning it, that he began to rebuke his Lord. Jesus so answered him that never more did any of his disciples interfere by remonstrance or objection to anything their Master did. "Let us go also, that we may die with him," was all they could say, when he seemed to run into needless danger.

CHAPTER XIII.

At Home Once More.

BUT though Jesus had rebuked Peter, he knew well the condition of mind that had made him speak so rashly. Six days after he took him with John and James into one of the high, solitary peaks of the range of Hermon, under which they had been sojourning. The ascent was a long one, and all the stillness of the mountains gathered round them as they climbed higher and higher into the purer air. They could see stretching southward their own land, which offered no sure resting-place to their Master. The white snows glistened above them, and all the solemn influences of silence, and loneliness, and separation, wrapped them round. They forgot the sorrows of the past weeks as the Lord prayed with them on the mountain-height, lifted far above all the cares and ambitions of the earth beneath. Then, as Jesus prayed, a glory shone about him, which transfigured his beloved face, and made his raiment white and glistening as the snow, which dazzled them in the sunshine. And whilst, with dazzled eyes, they gazed upon him, two forms of Moses and Elias, the greatest of the prophets, appeared to them talking with Jesus. Their wondering ears heard them talk, not of the triumphs and conquests of Messiah's kingdom, but of the death which they shrank from thinking of. How long they listened to this heavenly discourse we do not know; but at length, sore afraid as they were, Peter spoke, not knowing what to say. "Master," he said, "it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles, one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias." Never would he choose to go down to the earth and common life again, if this heavenly vision would but remain. Even then, as he finished speaking, a cloud overshadowed

them, and a voice was heard to come out of the cloud, "This is my beloved Son; hear him." And suddenly all had vanished, and there was no man any more, save Jesus only, with themselves.

It seems as if they stayed all night in the solemn stillness of the mountain, listening to much their Master had to tell them, and asking him such questions as came first to their minds. He told them that he should rise again the third day after the chief priests and Pharisees had slain him; but they kept that saying with themselves, questioning what it meant, and not venturing to ask him for his meaning. When the morning came they began their long descent to the valley below, at every lingering step drawing nearer to the stir and tumult of life, which they had desired to escape from, and which seemed so much poorer and more paltry than it had ever done before.

As they drew near to the valley they saw a great multitude of people surrounding the rest of the disciples; but as soon as they themselves were in sight, all the crowd, beholding Jesus, were greatly amazed, and, running to him, saluted him. It would seem as though some gleam of the indescribable glory still lingered in his face, as the face of Moses shone when he had been speaking with the Lord in Mount Sinai. Some scribes were there who had been questioning the nine apostles, and Jesus asked them what they had wanted. One of the crowd replied that he had brought his son, who was possessed with a devil, and as the Master was away, he had asked his disciples to cast him out, and they could not. Very probably they had attempted to do so, and had failed, so arousing a great excitement among the bystanders. The poor father's hope had been crushed, and his faith weakened, if not destroyed. "O faithless generation!" cried Jesus, "how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him unto me." Then, speaking to the father, he said, "If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth." He, looking into the divine face before him, cried out with tears, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." That was enough; his son was restored to him, and Jesus, passing on, went into the house where he and his disciples were sojourning, worn out with the exhausting events of the last twenty-four hours.

After this Jesus returned quietly through Galilee, wishing no man to know it. Some of his disciples, on this journey, disputed among themselves as to which should be the greatest, so little prepared were they for the end which he foresaw so plainly. He taught them what that end must be, but they did not understand him, and were afraid to ask him. But we must re-

member that the nine had not heard of the solemn transfiguration on the mount; for Jesus had straitly charged the three that they should tell no man.

As they approached Capernaum they found that at last it was safe to enter it, after their wanderings, and to be at home once more. The hottest months of the year were come, when there was almost a burning heat in the valley of the Jordan, and on the shores of the lake of Galilee; and very likely the wealthiest and most influential persons of the towns on the lake were gone away, or, at least, were less inclined to active exertions. Neither do any crowds seem to gather about Jesus, who indeed kept himself aloof from any public display. He spent his time in teaching his disciples and such persons as came to him, trying to prepare their minds for what was to come, and to fit them for their future work. A peaceful, happy few weeks for Mary, who had her Son again beside her for a little while; yet her heart would sink often as she heard his sayings, and began to see with a mother's fearful eye that no throne awaited him in the city of David.

It seems to have been his last sojourn in Capernaum, a quiet breathing time, in which he could taste once more the peace and rest of a home. Children were about him; and besides his mother, the women who were his friends and disciples, and whose greatest gladness was to minister to him. We may suppose that some of the apostles would resume for the time their fishing on the lake, and that James and John would dwell again under their father's roof. When they gathered together in the cool of the evening Jesus taught them the mysteries of the kingdom of God, not in parables, as he taught others. Now he put into precept and commandment that which he had set before them by his example. They were to tread in his steps, to go about doing good; to find it more blessed to give than to receive; to forgive their enemies; to be perfect even as their Father in heaven was perfect. Hard lessons! Yet the seed fell upon good ground, and, hidden there for some months, finally brought forth fruit a hundred-fold.

Before long, however, the peace of this short truce with his foes was disturbed by the approach of the autumnal Feast of Tabernacles. It was that joyous feast, after harvest and before the rains of winter, which attracted so many of the country folks up to Jerusalem, to dwell in booths for a week; when each worshipper carried to the temple branches of citron and myrtle, willow and palm, in his hands; and each day a glad procession attended a priest to fetch water from the pool of Siloam in a golden pitcher, to be afterwards poured at the base of the altar. Even the nights were made

jubilant with services in the temple, the lights in which lit up the house-tops of Jerusalem, with their booths of thick branches, and shone afar off in the darkness ; whilst the sound of song, and the music of harps and lutes, cymbals and trumpets, echoed far and near in the stillness of the night.

The cousins of our Lord, who would naturally be more impatient even than his other disciples for a public assertion of his claims, now began to urge him to go up to the feast, which they were about to attend. We cannot suppose that they did not believe in him at all ; they knew him to be mighty in works and in words ; and they desired ambitiously that he should display his power to his disciples in Judæa, though they could not have been ignorant of the danger he must run. But as yet they did not believe him to be the Son of God. They could not understand his conduct, in claiming so much, yet refusing to be made a king, or at least the leader of a popular party against the Romans. Possibly they may have thought that if Jesus joined the caravan of pilgrims starting for the feast, he would not be able to withdraw himself from their enthusiasm, and would be carried forward to Jerusalem as their Messiah, when multitudes, who hated the Roman yoke, would rise to join him, and he would be forced to assume the position they wished for him to take.

But Jesus, discerning their motives, bade them go up to the feast alone ; whilst he remained behind in Galilee, until after the caravan, with its ever-increasing band of enthusiastic pilgrims, had gone on. Then, with his own little band of faithful friends, he set out for Jerusalem through Samaria, the nearest and least frequented route. In fact, no other pilgrims were likely to choose this way ; for when Jesus himself sent forward some messengers to a village in Samaria, to make ready for them, the inhabitants would not supply them with any necessities, would not even receive them into the village, because their journey was toward Jerusalem. But when James and John asked if they should not copy the example of Elijah, and call down fire from heaven to consume them, Jesus rebuked them, uttering one of the sayings which all his life through had been his motto, "The Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them." And they went to another village less bigoted, where, perhaps, he was known as the prophet who had passed by that way early in the year.

At the feast there was a good deal of argument and discussion about Jesus. He was sought for in the temple, amid the worshippers with their palm branches, but he was not to be found. Quietly all the people were talking

about him, some saying, "He is a good man;" others, "Nay, but he deceiveth the people." The Pharisees had already widely spread their opinion that he was an impostor, and his miracles deceptions, by which the people were misled. But no one spoke openly of him for fear of the Sanhedrim, who possessed the dreaded power of casting an offender out of the synagogue, a punishment similar to that of excommunication.

In the midst of the feast, however, Jesus appeared in the temple, not quietly either, but openly in his office as teacher and prophet. The people were amazed at his boldness, and equally amazed at the inactivity of the Sanhedrim, who seemed reluctant to interfere with him at the first. They were in truth privately planning how to take him; but the feasts were so often the occasion of riot and confusion that they sought rather to lay hands on him in secret, so as to avoid any open disturbance. This the constant presence of his disciples and friends from Galilee made impossible during the week of the feast. On the last day, that great day of the feast, when the priests marched seven times round the altar, singing Hosannah, and the leaves were shaken off the willow boughs in the hands of the worshippers, and the water from Siloam was poured for the last time on the altar, then Jesus stood forth, before the crowded congregation, and cried, "If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink."

Many of the people upon hearing this saying, and feeling the awful courage of any prophet standing thus in their midst, and crying aloud words of such meaning, could not but believe that he was of a truth the Christ. Others asked, "Shall Christ come out of Galilee?" And there was a division among them, some being even willing to take him; but no man laid hands on him. The temple officers, who had been sent by the Sanhedrim to arrest him and bring him before them, were so impressed by his words and manner of speaking, that they dared not touch him, but chose rather to return to their masters, and own that never man spake like him. The Pharisees answered sharply that they, too, were deceived, though none of the rulers or Pharisees had believed on him; none but the common people, who were too ignorant to know the law. Nicodemus, who was his disciple, though secretly, now ventured to remonstrate, but met with a sharp and sneering reply. After which every man went home; and Nicodemus probably took care that Jesus should be warned of the plots of the Pharisees.



CHRIST AND PETER.

"O THOU OF LITTLE FAITH, WHEREFORE DIDST THOU DOUBT?"—MATT. 14 : 31.



JESUS IN THE HOUSE OF MARY AND MARTHA.—LUKE 10 : 38.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Last Autumn.

FROM that time Jesus appears to have spent his nights out of Jerusalem, only venturing to appear there in the daytime, when his friends were about him. On the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives, about two miles from Jerusalem, was a small village called Bethany. This low mountain was henceforth to be his favorite haunt, and this village his most frequent home. There lived in it a family of friends whom he loved dearly, with a marked and special friendship. They were people of some importance, and were well known in Jerusalem; and it was now, probably, that they often received him into their house as their beloved guest.

Early on the first Sabbath day, after the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus came to the temple, and sat down to teach in the treasury, which was a colonnade surrounding the court for women, the usual place for worship. Here, of course, most of the congregation could both see and hear him; and especially those who paused to cast in their gifts into the trumpet-shaped chests which stood against the wall. His teaching was interrupted by the questions and remarks of the Pharisees, who grew more and more malicious, until, at length, after calling him a Samaritan, and telling him he had a devil, they madly gathered up the stones which were lying by to be used in repairing part of the building, and would have stoned him to death in the courts of the temple itself, had he not hid himself from them, and passed by through their midst. No riot ensued, for, now the feast was over, the great mass of people were dispersed; and this, probably, gave them the courage to attack him thus suddenly and openly.

But no danger to himself could hinder him from a work of mercy. As he was passing from the temple his disciples called his attention to a blind man, who was, perhaps, begging at the gate by which they left the temple.

From this gate, which was at the northwest of the temple enclosure, there ran a causeway down into the lower city, where the poorer classes, to whom the blind beggar belonged, had their shops and houses. The disciples asked him which had sinned, the man or his parents, that he should be born blind. Jesus answered them this blindness was no effect of sin either in himself or his parents; and, repeating the words with which he had begun his sermon in the temple, "I am the light of the world," he anointed the poor man's eyes with clay, and bade him go to wash in

the pool of Siloam. Siloam lay south of the temple mount, and many a joyous procession had gone down to it for water during the feast. The blind beggar had to make his way through the busiest streets of the lower city, his eyes smeared with the clay. He must have been very well known in this poor neighborhood, and when he came back from Siloam, with his sight restored, there was a great excitement. Some among them disputed whether he was the blind beggar or no. They gathered about him, asking how his eyes had been opened, and he told them frankly all he knew. This Jesus, who was spoken of as one of those impostors who deceived the people of Galilee by false miracles, was he who had restored sight to him, although he had been born blind.

The escape of Jesus from their sudden attack must have left the Pharisees in a state of irritated disappointment; and their vexation was certainly not lessened when a throng of people from the lower city brought to them a man upon whom such a wonderful miracle had been wrought at the very moment of his escape. They had been carefully fostering the opinion that Jesus was an impostor, and here was direct proof to the contrary. They could seize only upon the one point which might be made to bear an evil aspect—"This man is not of God, because he keepeth not the Sabbath day." But some of the Pharisees themselves objected to this, asking, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" There was a division amongst them. They even referred to the beggar, asking him what he said of the man who had opened his eyes. "He is a prophet," he answered unhesitatingly.

Upon this they professed not to believe that the man had been blind, and they sent for his parents, both father and mother. They were timid people, poor, of course, in circumstances, and therefore the more afraid of being turned out of the synagogue, and so of losing their livelihood. They could not afford to be bold in behalf of their son. "He is of age," said the poor, trembling parents; "we know he is our son, and that he was born blind, but we do not know anything else. He shall speak for himself." It may have been, it probably was, the first time the man's eyes had seen his father and mother; he knew their voices, but their faces he now looked upon with his new power of sight, marvelling, no doubt, at the strange world at once opened to him, and unable to read as we do the expression of those about us. The frowns of the Pharisees, the downcast timidity of his parents, the eager gaze of his old neighbors, were a strange language to him.

The Pharisees questioned and cross-questioned the poor beggar, but he was a man of shrewd common sense, and of great courage, perhaps the courage of ignorance. He maintained firmly, that one thing he did know, whereas he was blind, now he could see. The blue heavens above, the splendor of the temple, the smoke rising from the altar, all those things of which he had heard so often, he could now see. At length, after being badgered into what seemed an outbreak of insolence from so mean a person, he cried, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth his will, him he heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, he could do nothing." Not long before the Pharisees had said to Jesus, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil!" These last words of the beggar so exasperated them that they immediately pronounced against him the sentence of excommunication, which, besides depriving him of his right as a Jew, would make him an alien and outcast in his father's house, amongst those kinsmen whose faces he had never yet beheld, but who would now turn away from him with shame and terror. Better for him if he had been left a blind beggar sitting at the gate of the temple.

But Jesus, who had bestowed upon him this blessing, now turned by the bigotry of the Pharisees into a curse, no sooner heard that he had been cast out of his synagogue, than he sought for him in his loneliness and misery. The blind man had boldly maintained that Jesus of Nazareth was a prophet come from God, in the face of those who were striving to put him to death. So when Jesus found him, stripped of love and religious rights, without father or mother in the world, and shut out from the temple and its sacrifices for sin, he revealed himself to the wretched man as being not a prophet merely, but the Son of God, that God from whom the sentence of excommunication seemed to cut him off. There was no need of the temple and the sacrifices for him, if he would but believe in the Son of God, who was greater than the temple. "Lord, I believe!" cried the man, as he worshipped him who had opened his eyes. And now, probably, as he was cast out of all other fellowship, he would be admitted into the circle of the disciples, who were willing to brave any penalties threatened by the Pharisees, and who already formed a little society of their own.

From amongst the disciples who had been with him at the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus had chosen seventy, and sent them by two and two on a

similar missionary tour to that short journey of the twelve apostles, which had been made in Galilee in the spring. The Jewish tradition was that God had ordained seventy nations to inhabit the earth, and Jesus may have chosen this number to indicate that his mission was not to the Jews only, but to all the world. The seventy were directed to visit certain villages, whither Christ intended to go himself, chiefly in Judæa, where he appears to have remained until about the middle of December.

Judæa had little of the beauty which made Galilee so dear to Jesus ; and it possessed none of those early associations, which make all men cling to the place of their early childhood. The hills of Judæa are bleak and bare ; the season was that of the sad and waning autumn, when the drought of summer was not repaired by the winter's rains. The people, though more polished, were less trustworthy and less independent than the Galileans. Society was more corrupt and artificial ; and Jesus mournfully likened the religious leaders to whited sepulchres, full of dead men's bones, and declared that they made their proselytes tenfold more the children of hell than themselves. The political condition of the country was even worse than in Galilee, where there was at least a Jewish tetrarch. Judæa was under a Roman ruler, and its fortresses were filled with Roman soldiers. Riots against Pontius Pilate were frequent. Robbers infested the roads ; and even between Jerusalem and Jericho, a highway between two chief cities, it was no uncommon occurrence to fall among thieves.

How Jesus avoided the snare of his enemies during these two months we are not told. But we must recollect they had no legal power to put him to death ; they had failed in crushing him by a sudden outbreak in the temple ; and the number and faithfulness of his followers preserved him from secret assassination. He passed from village to village, always dogged by the Pharisees, who hoped to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him to Pilate, who, though he did not trouble himself to interfere with a Jewish prophet, would speedily put an end to any political agitator. There was constantly some danger of Jesus appearing to him in this character, from the innumerable multitudes which gathered about him wherever he appeared ; always a perilous sign when a country is ripe, as Judæa was, for rebellion.

It was during this time that Jesus probably made that visit to Bethany, when Martha is first mentioned as receiving him into her house, and being so much cumbered about much serving as to speak somewhat sharply to him, though he was both her Lord and her guest. "Lord, dost thou not

care that my sister hath left me to serve alone?" she asked. "Bid her therefore that she help me." No doubt he had seen all this house-pride and hospitable impatience before, when his cousins in Nazareth had made feasts for their friends; and we can fancy him smiling at the hurried and weary woman. "Martha, Martha," he answered, gently, "thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that better part, which shall not be taken away from her."

Once again, during these two months, the old blasphemy revived, that he was casting out devils by the prince of devils. The old accusation of breaking the Sabbath was also renewed. He was in some village synagogue, where he saw a poor woman bowed together so that she could not lift up herself. He did not wait for her to ask for help, but called her to him, and laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight. The ruler of the synagogue was very indignant, and addressing the people forbade them to come to be healed on the Sabbath day. "Hypocrite!" cried the Lord; "doth not each of you on the Sabbath loose his ox or his ass from the stall, and lead him away to watering? And ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan hath bound, lo, these eighteen years, be loosed from this bond on the Sabbath day?" For once all his adversaries were ashamed; and all the people rejoiced for the glorious things that he had done.

The winter was now come, and with it the Feast of the Dedication of the Temple. This feast, like that of Purim, was not one appointed by the law of Moses, and therefore it was not generally kept by the Galileans, or the Jews living far from Jerusalem. It was celebrated in honor of the reconsecration of the temple after a terrible and shameful pollution of it a hundred and sixty-six years before Christ. Comparatively a modern festival, it was however a time of great mirth and gladness; and it was called the Feast of Lights, from the custom of illuminating the city during its celebration. Once more Jesus resolved to show himself openly amidst his deadliest foes. There was a colonnade running round the court of the Gentiles, called Solomon's porch, which afforded shelter from the cold winds of winter. Here he chose to walk to and fro, teaching, as was his custom, those who crowded about him to learn. The Pharisees surrounded him in this place, asking him to say plainly if he were the Christ, or Messiah, probably with the hope that he would claim this kingly title, and so lay himself open to an accusation before Pilate. The Lord's reply afforded them no such ground, but he uttered words which excited their fiercest anger. Again they

took up stones to stone him ; but he escaped out of their hands, and left Jerusalem to enter it but once more.

Jesus now withdrew altogether from Judæa, into the place beyond Jordan, where John had at first baptized. It was in the same valley, beside the same river, where he had spent the first summer of his public life, whilst John was still alive, and teaching and baptizing not far from him. Only twelve months had passed since he had left that quiet retreat, to enter upon a career full of change, of wanderings, of increasing difficulties and dangers. His enemies had laid wait for him ; had never wearied of hunting him from place to place ; had three times attempted his life at the feasts. His own kinsmen did not fully believe in him ; his numerous friends were bewildered and dissatisfied ; and his disciples, though still faithful to him, were disappointed, and looked anxiously into the future. It was wintry weather ; the sky was heavy with clouds, and storms swept across the land. The summer seemed also to have faded out of his life ; all that gladness with which his God had crowned him above his fellows. Poor, homeless, and an exile ; rich only in the friendship of a few fishermen and peasants who made themselves homeless and exiles for his sake ; with a traitor always at his side, and a host of deadly foes conspiring against him : thus Jesus passed the last winter of his life.

Whilst he was in Perea many people came to him, who remembered what John the Baptist had said of him. John had not yet been dead twelve months, and the anger of the people against Herod had not died away. Many of them believed on Jesus, as he went about, according to his custom, from village to village, teaching, in homely parables, which took firm hold of the minds and memories of his hearers. Very possibly the Pharisees sought to get Herod to arrest him ; but this he dared not do, so unpopular had he become by the murder of John. They tried, therefore, to frighten Jesus back into Judæa, and they came to him with a warning. "Get thee out, and depart hence," they said, "for Herod will kill thee." But Jesus had certain work to do in that country, and he was not to be driven from it by their cunning or Herod's. One of the miracles he wrought at this time in Perea was in the house of one of the chief Pharisees of that neighborhood, where he had been invited, that they might watch him. It was the Sabbath day, and a man was set before him afflicted with dropsy. As usual, Jesus did not hesitate to heal him, the lawyers and Pharisees finding nothing to say against his doing so. After this he gave both to the guests and to his host certain rules concerning

feasts, which were very different from those usually observed. To this period also belong the parables of the Great Supper, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin, the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, and the Rich Man and Lazarus.

CHAPTER XV.

Lazarus.

LAZARUS, that name which Jesus had given to the poor beggar carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom, was also the name of a friend whom he loved dearly, and of whom his mind was at this moment full. About the same time that the Pharisees had come to him with their cunning stratagem to drive him into Judæa, there had reached him a message from the home in Bethany: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." Martha and Mary, the sisters of Lazarus, did not, because they could not, urge their Lord to come to them. The peril was great. Nay, if he had gone at once he would have fallen into the very snare his enemies had laid for him. He stayed, therefore, two days where he was, teaching the people as usual, and betraying no design of leaving that place. But on the third day, when the danger was somewhat passed by, though his disciples still remonstrated with him for venturing again to Judæa, he set out for Bethany. Thomas, the most timid and doubtful of the disciples, said to his companions, in a despair which proves the strength of his attachment to his Master, "Let us also go, that we may die with him."

It was a toilsome journey, hurriedly and secretly taken. The disciples, like other men in a country of foes, must have been anxious and uneasy, not altogether seeing the necessity of this new peril. The Lord himself was probably troubled and sorrowful, for he knew that Lazarus was dead, and he sympathized with the grief of his sisters. On the fourth day after his death he reached the village, but did not enter it, only sending a message to the sisters that he had come. The house was filled with Jews from Jerusalem, which was only two miles away, and Martha, as soon as she heard that Jesus was near, rose up, and went out to meet him, lest he should be unaware of the risk he was running. But Mary was too deeply sunk in sorrow even to hear that he who loved them was so close at hand. It was not until he sent Martha to her, who told her secretly, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee," that she knew he was there.

Mary did not possess Martha's characteristic caution and prudence. She rose up quickly, and hurried to seek Jesus outside the town where he was staying, without attempting to conceal her movements. A number of the Jews followed her, thinking she was going to her brother's grave to weep there. The whole company, weeping and mourning, came to the place where Jesus was waiting for Mary, in the midst of his anxious disciples. But the grief of the two sisters, and his own tears, saved him at this moment. They even wept with them, and exclaimed, "Behold, how he loved him!" In a sacred brotherhood of grief they led him to the cave where his friend had been lying for four days.

Some of them, who had known of the miracle performed on the blind beggar, asked among themselves if he could not have saved Lazarus from dying. But it was too late now. Here was the grave, with the stone laid upon it, beneath which the dead body had been decaying these four days. Even Martha objected to having the stone taken away. It may be that some among them had heard how the widow's son, at Nain, had appeared to come to life again when he was about to be buried; but how different that was to the case of a man so well known, who had been dead so long! Close by Jerusalem, too, where the rulers were seeking to put Jesus to death as an impostor!

But the stone was taken away, and all stood silent, looking on with awe. Did Jesus wish to see once again the form of his friend, now conquered by the last enemy, Death? He did not enter into the cave, but crying with a loud voice, which rang through the silence of the crowd and the stillness of the grave, he said, "Lazarus, come forth!"

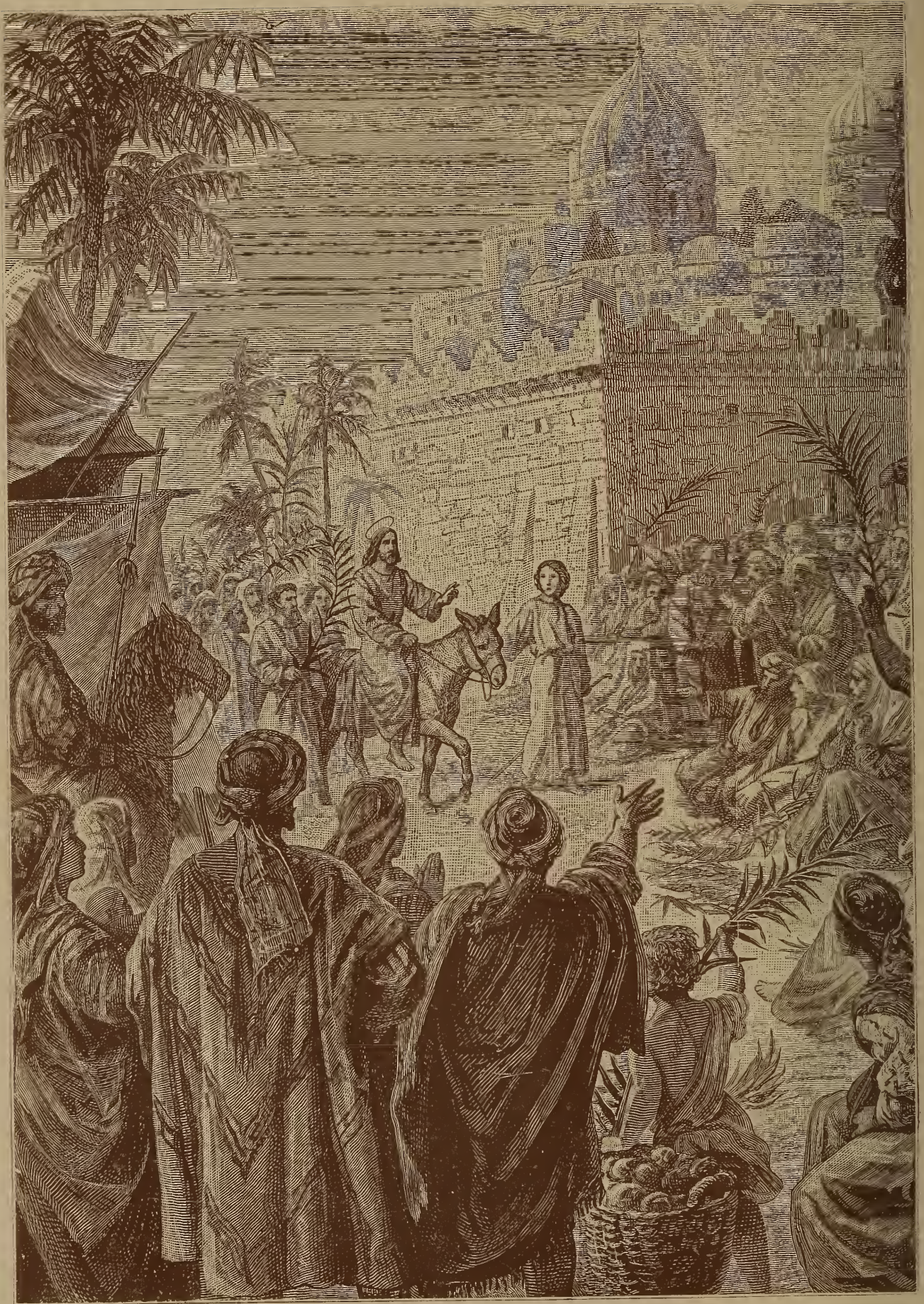
How every heart must have throbbed! Was it possible that the dead ear could catch the sound, and the dead form move? Did they press round the cave, or shrink away in fear? We cannot tell; but the moment of suspense was short. They could hear a stir and movement within the sepulchre; and Lazarus, bound hand and foot with grave-clothes, and his face hidden from them by a napkin, appeared in the doorway on which all eyes were fastened. The deathly pallor of his face had vanished, and his eyes were bright again with life, before they could take away the cloth that hid it; and the limbs that had been bound in grave-clothes for four days were strong enough to carry him home to his house, across whose door-sill they had borne him in the stillness and helplessness of death.

Many of the people from Jerusalem who saw this miracle believed in Jesus. We may confidently suppose that for this night at least he was



CHRIST RAISING LAZARUS.

"LAZARUS, COME FORTH."—LUKE 11 : 43.



CHRIST ENTERING JERUSALEM.

"HOSANNA, BLESSED IS HE THAT COMETH IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."—MARK 11:9.

secure from all attempts to arrest him ; and that he could safely stay with the friends he had so marvellously blessed. But some of the bystanders went their way at once to the Pharisees to tell them what had been done. The time was at last come when the chief priests began to take a more active interest in crushing this prophet from Nazareth. They were mostly Sadducees ; Caiaphas the high-priest, and Annas, his father-in-law, a most powerful man, being at the head of the Sadducees. Hitherto they had regarded Jesus with contempt, as one beneath their notice. But one of their leading tenets was the denial of the resurrection ; and this strange story from Bethany could not but be exceedingly repulsive and alarming to them. They took counsel together with the Pharisees to put him to death ; and as they, the aristocracy of the temple, had much more political power than the middle-class Pharisees, their antagonism greatly increased the peril of Jesus. Caiaphas, the high-priest, was exceedingly emphatic upon the necessity of destroying him, saying sharply to the counsel, " Ye know nothing at all, nor consider that it is expedient for us, that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not."

Jesus had two friends among these counsellors thus plotting his death, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea ; and possibly they gave him instant warning of his increasing danger, for he left Bethany immediately, and that home which he had made so happy, to withdraw to Ephraim, a town on the borders of Samaria, where at any hour he could cross the frontier and place himself beyond the reach of both Sadducees and Pharisees. He stayed there not many weeks, and then began his last farewell circuit through Samaria and Galilee, as it would seem rather for the purpose of visiting these places once more, than of teaching or of healing. It was now the early spring, and the corn-fields of Samaria and Galilee would be already springing into life under the ripening sun ; half-opened leaf-buds were green upon the trees ; and the grassy turf was strewn with daisies, and lilies, and anemones of all colors. Probably he crossed the plain of Esdraelon, over which he had so often gazed from the hills of Nazareth. But we do not find that he ventured into any of the familiar villages ; but rather, like one hunted as a partridge upon the mountains, the wandering Son of man turned aside out of Galilee, and descending into the deep valley of the Jordan, waited on the eastern bank of the river for his hour to come ; that hour which was very soon to strike.

But even here he was not left alone in peace with his disciples. The spies, with whom he was always surrounded, came to him as usual with

perplexing and difficult questions. "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" they asked. Herod, as we know, had put away his wife to marry Herodias, much to the displeasure of his people, who regarded it as a scandalous act. This question of divorce was one angrily disputed among the people, and especially among the Pharisees. It could scarcely be answered without giving deep offence to large numbers of persons. For once Jesus took the side of the bitter and bigoted Pharisees of the school of Shammai; and by so doing gave occasion to his own disciples to venture upon a remonstrance to him, saying the case of the man was hard. But the women, who were the real sufferers under the law, were greatly pleased; and immediately upon his answer, so wise and just, becoming known, they brought to him their little children, both girls and boys, that he might pray for them. The disciples somewhat bitterly rebuked their enthusiasm, and would have sent them away, had not Jesus interfered, being much displeased. He had come to raise woman to her proper position, and to make little children the care of all who would enter the kingdom of God. He ordered them, therefore, to be brought to him, and having laid his hands upon their heads, and blessed them, he left the place; probably lest the enthusiasm of the women should create too great a commotion.

Not long after this there came to him a rich young man, a ruler of a synagogue, who had kept the law from his youth up, and wanted some good thing yet to do. Quickly, Jesus put him to the test. "If thou wilt be perfect," he answered, "go and sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." He was exceedingly grieved at this reply, and went away sorrowful. Jesus, who, when he saw him, loved him, exclaimed mournfully, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" Upon that, Peter began to contrast himself and his fellow-disciples with this rich ruler, saying, "Lo, we have left all to follow thee!" It was true; and Jesus must have felt deeply the faithfulness of his simple-minded followers. He promised them that they should receive the reward the young ruler had been seeking to obtain, even eternal life. But, as though he must check the vain hopes always at work in their hearts, he told them many that were first should be last, and the last first.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Last Sabbath.

LINGERING on the eastern banks of Jordan till a few days before the passover, Jesus was there no doubt joined by his mother, his kinsmen, and the women from Galilee, who had so often ministered to him, as they went up to Jerusalem for the feast. Numbers of pilgrims had already gone up before the feast-day to purify themselves; and both the chief priests and Pharisees had given commandment that if any man knew where he was, he should tell it. They wished to take him quietly, before the great masses of the people were gathered together in the Holy City; but they began to fear that he would stay away, as he had done the year before. They asked one another in the temple, "What think ye, that he will not come to the feast?"

Already Jesus was on his way, and was pressing onward, his face set towards Jerusalem. He went before his bewildered and troubled disciples, as though eager to get to his journey's end. The disciples were often depressed by his incomprehensible warnings, but still oftener they seem to have been dazzled by visions of some approaching splendor. Amongst the women who had joined them from Galilee was Salome, the mother of James and John. She came to beg a boon from him—that her sons might sit on his right hand and on his left in his kingdom. Though the rest were much displeased with James and John because of this petition, they had frequently discussed among themselves which should be the greatest; and possibly Judas, who kept the common purse, felt himself of more importance than the others, and at least certain of being treasurer in the coming kingdom. Jesus called them to him, and after telling them that whosoever among them would be the chiefest must be the servant of all, he added the beautiful saying, "For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

But what did his mother think of this kingdom of her son's? We do not know. She was now once more with him, treading the familiar, yearly pilgrimage which they had taken together for so many happy spring-tides. Probably, she partook more fully of the mood and spirit of Christ than his other friends; and though now and then there might be a flutter of timid hope in her mother's heart, his grave, sad face, and solemn warnings, must have prepared her for the darkness, not the splendor, of the coming hour.

The city of Jericho was a few miles from the Jordan, on the way to Jerusalem, standing in a magnificent grove of palm-trees, and amid gardens of balsam. Jesus was passing through the city, surrounded by a multitude of followers and curious spectators, when the chief of the tax-gatherers, a rich man, who was desirous to see him, ran before, and climbed into a tree; for he was little of stature, and, in spite of his wealth, possessed no favor or influence with his fellow-countrymen, that they should make way for him in the press. Jesus, coming to the place, looked up, and called him by name. "Zaccheus, make haste, and come down," he said; "for to-day I must abide at thy house." Joyfully he descended from among the branches, and led the way to his dwelling-place. But at this all who saw it murmured. The man was a notorious sinner, one who had enriched himself by unfair means, besides engaging in an infamous trade. But Jesus had not called him without knowing his nature, and what influence he could exercise over him. A day or two before, when the rich young ruler had come to ask what more good things he should do, having kept the law from his youth up, Jesus had proposed to him as a test that he should sell all that he had, and give to the poor. We know how he shrank from giving up his riches. This very test Zaccheus adopted of his own choice. He stood up in the midst of his accusing fellow-citizens, and said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold." If the cheating of Zaccheus in his tax-gathering had been on any large scale, this restitution would leave him a poor man indeed. Jesus, knowing how hard it was for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven, said to him, "This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham;" and he finished by perhaps his most beautiful and most characteristic saying, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost."

Probably Jesus stayed that night in the house of Zaccheus, and set out the next morning for Bethany. A numerous body of friends and pilgrims as usual gathered around him to accompany him up the steep and rocky road, which led to the Mount of Olives, under the brow of which stood the little village where Lazarus lived. The day before, as he entered into Jericho, a blind man had heard him passing by, and asked who it was coming thus surrounded by a crowd. Now this blind man, with a comrade in the same plight, sat by the wayside, waiting for his approach. No sooner did they hear that Jesus of Nazareth was nigh, than they began to cry out to

him, a shrill, piercing cry, which reached his ear, even amid the babble of the crowd. It was a strange cry in Judæa. "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on us!" "Son of David!" All who heard it knew what it meant: and many amongst them must have been offended. They rebuked the blind men, and charged them to hold their peace. One of them was a well-known beggar, blind Bartimeus; but he was the loudest in his petition, crying out a great deal the more in spite of their displeasure, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" Jesus stood still, and called the blind men to him, having compassion on them; and they, receiving their sight, followed him up the steep ascent to Bethany, glorifying God.

It was probably Friday when Jesus entered Bethany; and one quiet Sabbath day he spent there with his friends, Lazarus and his sisters. No doubt they had been forewarned of his arrival, and Martha, as once before, had been cumbered with household cares in his honor. For they made him a feast, in the house of Simon, a leper who had been restored to health by the Lord; and Martha served at this supper. It was only a few weeks since Lazarus had been called back from the grave; and this was the first opportunity they had had of giving him public honor and thanksgiving. The Sabbath was always a day of feasting and rejoicing among the Jews; and no doubt a large company was invited on this occasion—so large, perhaps, that Simon's house was chosen as being more commodious than their own. It is specially noticed that Lazarus sat at the table with Jesus; and that much people of the Jews knew that the Lord was there, and came out to see not him only, but Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.

Mary, wishful to show her love and devotion as well as Martha, who was waiting upon their Master, and counting nothing too costly to be spent for such a purpose, brought an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and breaking the box, anointed both his head and his feet with it, caring not to save a drop of the rare perfume for any other use. The fragrance of it filled the whole house where they were assembled. Some of the disciples, specially Judas Iscariot, felt indignant at this extravagance. For they were poor men, unaccustomed to luxury, and naturally intolerant of expensive whims, such as this act of Mary's seemed to them.

"Why was this waste of ointment made?" they asked. Judas calculated how much it was worth, and said it might have been sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor. These murmurs troubled Mary, who had thought of nothing but how she could best show her love to the

Master. "Let her alone," said Jesus; "against the day of my burying hath she kept this. For the poor always ye have with you, but me ye have not always." They were mournful words for Mary to hear. Was she indeed anointing her Lord beforehand, as if already death had laid its hand secretly upon him? Was it for this she had saved her precious ointment? She had kept it carefully to be used on some rare occasion, and now that she had poured it all without stint upon his head and feet, he said it was for his burial! But to take away if possible the sting of his sad words, Jesus said tenderly, "Whosoever the gospel shall be preached in the whole world, this shall be told as a memorial of her."

This feast, given so publicly to Jesus, aroused the anger of the chief priests against Lazarus. The miracle had been so manifest, and so difficult, if not impossible, to gainsay, that by reason of him many of the people in Jerusalem believed in Jesus. That Lazarus also must be put to death was the decision arrived at by the chief priests; though the Pharisees do not seem to have had anything to do with this resolve. He was too well known at Jerusalem for him to be left as a witness to the miraculous powers of Jesus of Nazareth.



BOOK III.

VICTIM AND VICTOR.

CHAPTER I.

The Son of David.



THE pilgrims who had left Jesus at Bethany, and gone on to Jerusalem, carried with them the news of his arrival, and excited considerable interest in the city. On the next day many people, hearing that he was on the road from Bethany, went out to meet him, and as they passed through the cool groves and gardens of Olivet, they plucked branches of palms and olives, and wove them together as they climbed the hill. Soon they saw him coming round the brow of the mountain along the road thronged by the bands of pilgrims, amongst a crowd of them, though easily discerned, as he was no longer on foot, but riding on the colt of an ass, upon which the disciples had cast their garments. At the sight of him they broke into a shout, which might readily have been heard in the temple courts. They shouted "Hosanna!" and the cry was taken up by the crowd surrounding Jesus, and echoed far in the clear atmosphere. "Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is the King of Israel, that cometh in the name of the Lord!" The road was quickly strewn with mats of palm branches, and with the garments of the excited throng. The disciples, hearing the shout of the Messiah, the battle-cry of the nation, must have felt that at last the kingdom was truly nigh at hand, and that their Master was about to take to himself his throne and sceptre, and to fulfil his promise to them that they should sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

But neither joy nor triumph was seen on the face of Jesus. As they wound slowly round the mount, a sudden turn of the road brought them in

sight of Jerusalem, with its palaces and temple in all their glory of marble and gold. It was a city worthy of being the capital of a great nation, beautiful for situation, the perfection of beauty in Jewish eyes; but when he beheld it thus lying before him, he wept over it. He foresaw the Roman legions casting a trench about it, besieging it straitly, and leaving not one stone upon another, and the day of salvation was passed, the things which belonged to its peace were now hidden. His mother, and those nearest him, heard the lamentation he uttered, and saw his tears falling, but the great crowd swept on, shouting and singing, down into the valley, and up again to the gate of Jerusalem.

All the city was by this time in a stir, asking, "Who is this?" The Galileans, proud of their prophet, were the most eager in their reply. "This is Jesus, the Prophet of Nazareth in Galilee," they answered, as the procession threaded the narrow streets, and thousands of people gazed down upon it from the house-tops, whilst the question ran along from house to house, "Who is this that cometh?" No marvel that shortly afterwards we find Greeks going to Philip, and saying to him, "Sir, we would see Jesus."

Soon the temple courts were flooded by the crowd. The children, always difficult to silence, did not cease to shout for any dread of the priests, or awe of the sacred place. They continued to cry, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Some of the Pharisees had asked him to rebuke his disciples on their way from Bethany, but now the powerful chief priests and scribes of the temple came to him in sore displeasure. "Hearest thou what these say?" they asked. "Yea," answered Christ, "have ye never read, Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?" He would neither forbid them, nor refuse to receive the title of Son of David, that cry which displeased his enemies so greatly. But as evening was near, and it was not safe for him to stay in the city during the night, he left the temple and returned to Bethany.

Probably, to avoid a repetition of these exciting occurrences, Jesus returned to the city very early the next morning. He had never omitted any opportunity of warning his disciples against hypocrisy; and this day, by a singular and symbolic act, he impressed his lessons on their memory. Being hungry on the way, and seeing a fig-tree in leaf, he turned aside to see if there were figs upon it; for the fruit of this tree precedes the opening of the leaf. There was nothing but leaves only—a fit emblem of the nation which, alone among all nations, professed the service of the one true God.



CHRIST IN THE TEMPLE.

"THIS POOR WIDOW HATH CAST IN MORE THAN THEY ALL."—LUKE 21 : 3.



Hofmann.

"HE THAT IS WITHOUT SIN AMONG YOU, LET HIM FIRST CAST A STONE AT HER."—JOHN 8:7.

"Let no fruit grow upon thee from henceforth forever!" he cried; and the next time they passed by, the disciples saw the fig-tree withered away.

Upon reaching the temple, once again he drove out the merchants and money-changers from the outer court. He had done this the last time he had come to the passover, two years before, saying, "Make not my Father's house a house of merchandise." Now, in bolder language, he told them that they were making it a den of thieves. By the time the court was cleared, it was known throughout the city that Jesus was in the temple, and the blind and the lame came to him to be healed in the sight of those deadly foes who represented him as an impostor. It was in vain they sought to seize him. The multitudes ever about him made it impossible to take him openly and by day. The chief priests were as much baffled as the less powerful Pharisees, for an uproar in the temple would inevitably bring down the Roman garrison dwelling in the tower of Antonia close by. At night they did not know where to find him; and soon it became plain that they must seek for a traitor among his most trusted followers.

The next day (Tuesday) Jesus again appeared very early in the temple; the people also hastened thither, eager and very attentive to hear him. He began to teach them, but he was soon interrupted by a party from the Great Sanhedrim, the highest legal and religious court of the nation, demanding by what authority he did such things, and who gave him this authority. Jesus replied, "I will also ask you a question. The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men?" It was their special province to decide such a matter, but they dared not answer according to their judgment, for they feared the people, who held John as a prophet. When they said, "We cannot tell," Jesus declined to answer their question concerning his authority. But in their hearing he uttered the terrible parable of the wicked husbandman, and the parable of the marriage of the king's son. They knew that he spoke of them, and their enmity grew, if possible, more vehement. But they stayed to listen no longer. They could not cope with such a speaker: his wisdom and skill in weaving parables turned the scale against them. The mass of the people might not catch the deeper meaning of his words, but there were many there who could not fail to see how keenly they were driven home against him.

The Pharisees, upon this discomfiture of the Sanhedrim, took counsel how they might entangle him in his talk. They sent some spies, feigning themselves to be honest, anxious-minded men, troubled with a scruple of conscience. Ought they to pay tribute to the Roman emperor? Jesus,

who cared for no man, but taught the way of God truly, should decide for them. It was a clever, cunning question. Many really devout Jews were not easy in their minds about this paying of taxes to a foreign power. The Galileans especially, among whom were his supporters, had risen again and again in rebellion on this very point. The kinsmen of those Galileans who had perished in these insurrections were at that moment among his hearers, ready to take fire at any judgment adverse to their martyred friends. The disciples themselves must have been listening eagerly for his reply. All, except Judas Iscariot, belonged to Galilee; and one of them, Simon the Zealot, appears to have once belonged to a fierce and cruel party, sworn both to slay and to die in defence of the law. Was it lawful to pay tribute to a foreign king?

Jesus himself was in a singular position. He had permitted the Galileans to carry him in triumph into Jerusalem, amid the significant shouts of "Hosanna to the Son of David!" He had spent two long days openly in the temple, teaching and working miracles in the face of his powerful enemies, who appeared paralyzed in their efforts to check or arrest him. His followers could not fail to see in these things that at last he claimed the Messiahship. Had he then resolved to gird his sword upon his thigh, and ride forth prosperously, with sharp arrows in the hearts of his adversaries? Was that right hand, which had been laid upon so many sufferers with a tender touch, about to learn terrible things? They dared not yet answer "Yes" to these questions, but they longed to do so. Yet the escape every evening from the city and their Master's solemn prophecies answered "No." Now he was asked, in the presence of foes, friends, and followers, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar?"

His reply disappointed them all, and served to diminish his popularity, though not to any dangerous extent. No uproar followed it. He bade them bring to him the tribute money, and they showed him a Roman coin, which was in common use in the country; a sign of their subjection to a foreign power. This subjection had been permitted by their king, Jehovah, who was still ruling them, as well as all the nations upon earth. If they had been more careful to render unto God the things that were God's, they might not now have to pay tribute to Cæsar. It had become their duty to render unto Cæsar the things that belonged to Cæsar.

There was nothing in this answer which could be made a ground of complaint to Pilate. The Pharisees and Herodians found themselves baffled. But now the courtly and polished Sadducees came forward, seeking to put

into an absurd light the doctrine of the resurrection, one of the points upon which he most insisted. Very likely Lazarus was standing near Jesus, the object of much interest and curiosity. The Sadducees, with the tact of men of the world, knew that nothing damages a cause as ridicule does. Jesus answered them solemnly, unveiling a little the mystery that enshrouds the state of the dead. They can die no more, neither marry. But they are equal to the angels, and are the children of God. Then referring them to their own Scriptures, and their lawgiver, Moses, whose authority they were bound to receive, he pointed out that when God spoke to him from the burning bush, he said, "I am the God of Abraham." "He is not a God of the dead," added Jesus, "but of the living: for all live unto him." The multitude were astonished at this answer; and certain of the scribes, who were standing by, whose lives had been spent in poring over the sacred books, cried out, "Master, thou hast well said!"

The Pharisees enjoyed hearing the Sadducees thus silenced; and one of them, a scribe, thought this a good opportunity for asking Jesus a question vehemently disputed among them: which was the chief commandment? "All the law and the prophets hang on two commandments," replied Jesus, "and these two are alike. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.'" The scribe listened to this answer with the approval of an honest man; and the Lord said to him, "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."

It is probable that it was on this day that a party of Pharisees dragged before him in the temple a miserable woman, detected in adultery. They set her in the midst, and called upon him to pass judgment on her. The law of Moses commanded that she should be stoned; but this law had fallen into complete disuse, and to revive it would shock the whole nation. Yet if he, as a prophet, set himself against Moses, they would have some ground for accusing him. He seems to have been filled with shame at the way this case was brought before him; and stooping down, he wrote with his finger upon the ground, giving no answer until they continued asking him. Then, lifting up himself for a moment, he said, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her." The hardened consciences of these men, even of the eldest, convicted them so poignantly of sin, that they stole away one by one, leaving the unhappy woman alone with him. When in the silence he lifted up himself a second time, he said to her, "Woman, where are those thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?" "No

man, Lord," she answered. "Neither do I condemn thee," he added, "go and sin no more."

This was the last effort of his enemies to tempt him; and they durst ask him no more questions. Jesus, some time during this day, put a question to them, which must have made his followers' hearts beat high. "What think ye of Christ?" he asked. "Whose Son is he?" An extraordinary question! He knew very well that by all, except a few, he was looked upon as the Son of Joseph, the carpenter of Nazareth. His question drew attention to one of the most striking flaws in his own claim to the title of Messiah. "The Son of David," answered the Pharisees promptly. Surely Mary, and those who knew the mystery of his birth, now expect him to proclaim it. Simeon and Anna were dead; but there might still be persons about the temple, who would bear testimony to their prophecies when the child Jesus was brought to be presented to the Lord. But no; this was not the point Jesus had in view. He showed the scribes how David in the spirit called Christ his Lord, and intimated that there was some meaning in the words which they had not fathomed. He said no more; and they could not answer him; but the common people heard him gladly.

At length, moved to the utmost indignation against the Pharisees, who, as the most religious class, ruled over and deceived the nation, he broke out into a vehement and unrestrained rebuke of their hypocrisy in the hearing of all the people. It was in the temple itself; and the day was far spent. Presently he was about to quit it, to seek shelter and safety out of the city, and he was never again to visit his Father's house. He rebuked them passionately, and ended his protest by lamenting once more over Jerusalem. "Behold, your house"—no longer calling it his Father's house—"is left unto you desolate! For I say unto you, ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord."

And now Jesus departed from the temple, never more to tread its courts. As he went out, his disciples, who were all amazed at hearing him say that house should be made desolate, pointed out to him the goodly stones and gifts, and enormously strong masonry of the walls. It was, in fact, a fortress all but impregnable; the defence of the city on the eastern side, where it stood on the brow of a precipitous rock. The stones of which the fortifications were built were of an extraordinary size. "Look, Master," they cried, "what manner of stones, and what buildings are here!" "Seest thou these great buildings?" he answered, mournfully, "There shall not be left one stone upon another that shall not be cast down."

CHAPTER II.

The Traitor.

QUITTING the city, Jesus went up the slope of the Mount of Olives, and sat down there over against the temple, looking across upon its marble walls and golden pinnacles. It was evening, and the setting sun touched it with level rays, whilst the valley beneath lay in deep shadow and gloom. It seems as if he could not turn away from it, though he had left it forever. It was now a den of thieves, the house of hypocrisy, not his Father's house. The disciples sat apart from him, distressed and discouraged. It had been altogether an agitating day. Their Master had had opportunities again and again of proclaiming his Messiahship, and had neglected or avoided them. His last vehement denunciation of the scribes and Pharisees had probably given as much offence to the people of Judæa as his answer about the tribute money had done to the Galileans. He seemed bent upon alienating his followers, and upon thrusting back the greatness offered to him.

At length Peter and Andrew, with James and John, came to him privately to ask when these things that he had spoken of should come to pass. He spoke to them in terms so clear of the immediate future that they could no longer hope to see him ascend an earthly throne, such as they had been dreaming of. He foretold sorrows such as had not been from the beginning of the creation. But he distinctly declared himself to be that Judge and King before whom all nations should be finally gathered for judgment and for separation. As he finished his long and sorrowful discourse, he said to these four favorite disciples, "Ye know that after two days is the feast of the passover, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified."

This was probably the first word they had heard of treachery, and it could not but have shocked and troubled them greatly. Who among his friends, those who were trusted with the secret of his hiding-places, could be base enough to turn traitor? It was a terrible thought. A spy was among them who was about to betray their Lord. Who could it be? Hastily they would run over the list of his nearest and most trusted followers, but they could not fix upon any one. Yet from that moment there was no rest for them from suspicion and dread of the unknown betrayer, from whom their Master could not be secured.

The next day, Wednesday, and most of Thursday, seems to have been a time of rest and peaceful retirement for Jesus. Probably he passed the hours chiefly with his disciples and his mother, in quiet conversation, or in silent thought, concerning all he had done and taught, and all they were to do when he was gone. Somewhere on the Mount of Olives, perhaps in the house of Lazarus, the solemn hours glided by, neither wholly sorrowful, nor wholly glad. Their Lord was still with them, and it was hard to believe that days of mourning were about to dawn. They could not see the coming sorrow, whilst their eyes still caught the light of his tender smile. They could not hear the murmur of the gathering storm, whilst they were listening to his gracious words. A happy, sorrowful, solemn time, such as never was so spent on earth, before or since. His loved ones were around him, those whom his Father had given to him, and none of them were lost, save one.

That lost one was not with them the whole of the day. Judas, the purse-bearer, had business to do in Jerusalem; so he left the friends and the Master, with whom he had ate and drunk, and wandered to and fro for twelve months, knowing them more intimately than many a man knows his brothers. He was weary of it all, and yesterday he had seen every vision of wealth fade away into a too certain prospect of persecution as a follower of the Prophet of Nazareth. The purse at his side felt empty; it would always be empty, unless he took care to fill it for himself. Probably, on his way to the city, he had to pass by a field he had set his mind on, and which he had perhaps partly purchased. It was not his yet, and it did not seem likely it would ever become his whilst he served his present Master. He entered Jerusalem with his mind made up. He knew one way by which he could get money to buy that field.

A council of the Great Sanhedrim was being held in the palace of the high-priest. The important question laid before the seventy-one chief men of the nation was how Jesus might be taken by craft and killed. Not on the feast day, lest there should be an uproar among the people; it must be done by subtlety, in the absence of the multitude. But when was Jesus alone? Where did he conceal himself when he left the city at nightfall? There were thousands of tents and booths erected round the city by the pilgrims, who could find no lodging-place within the walls; and it would be impossible to find him. They needed some one to betray him.

This need was met in Judas. They had not even to seek him, for he came voluntarily to bargain with them how much they should give him

for delivering his Master to them. They were glad, and promised to give him thirty pieces of silver, to be paid when they had their prey in their hands. Possibly Judas felt in a measure justified by his knowledge of the miraculous powers of Christ, if he only chose to use them for escaping from his enemies, or even for destroying them? He, who could call Lazarus from the dead, had but to speak the word, and no foe could stand before him. And if Jesus were bent upon death, it was but prudent to secure himself, and make some provision for the dreary future, in place of that which he had forsaken to follow him.

Did Judas go back in the fall of the evening to the tranquil company on Olivet, and take his place among them, with a smile upon his face, and news from the city on his lips? Did he sit down with them to their simple, homely supper, listening to catch up what arrangements had been made for the night; where his Master should sleep, and who would be nearest to him within hearing? Did he see the worn, anxious face of Mary, smiling only when she met the eyes of her Son, who had lived with her so many peaceful years under their lowly roof at Nazareth? Did he join in the evening hymn sung before they separated for the night, the last they would thus spend together? We must suppose that he did something like this; that he was still their comrade and fellow-apostle, Judas; and that none guessed the business that had taken him to Jerusalem, nor the bargain he had made there.

CHAPTER III.

The Paschal Supper.

ALL the next day Judas was seeking a convenient opportunity to betray Christ. He soon discovered that it was his Master's purpose to eat the Paschal supper in Jerusalem; for there, and there only, could it be eaten. No doubt Mary, with that band of timid and faithful women, now gathered about him, would urge him to forego his determination, so great was the danger of venturing into the city and passing a night there. But with a strong desire had he desired to eat that passover with his disciples; the first and only one they could celebrate with him. He called Peter and John to him, and bade them go and prepare the passover. At last, then, Judas was satisfied that he would be caught in the double snare of the city and the feast.

It was the day on which the passover must be killed. At noon all work was laid aside, and all leaven destroyed, unleavened bread alone being lawful food for the next eight days. In the temple the evening sacrifice was offered an hour earlier than on other days, for the number of passover lambs to be slain before nightfall was immense. During this week the whole company of the priests was on duty; and the courts of the temple were crowded with the multitudes of Jews who had come up to the city to keep the passover, and brought their lambs to slay for the Paschal supper, which had to be eaten that night; the first day of the passover beginning as soon as the stars became visible in the sky.

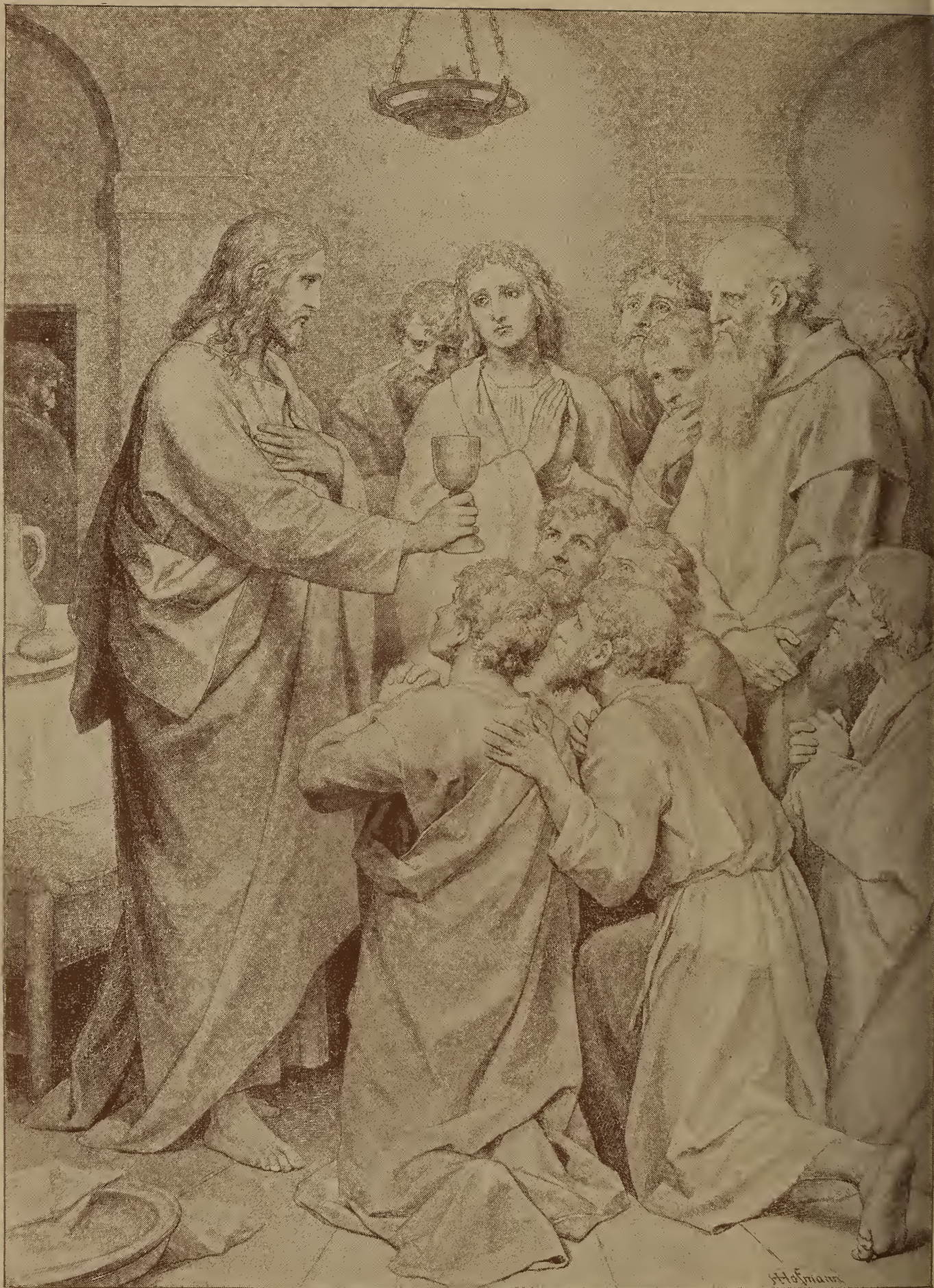
Peter and John, not Judas the purse-bearer, had been sent by Jesus to prepare the feast. They had to choose and buy a suitable lamb, carry it up to the temple, and see that it was roasted for supper. They had asked where they were to prepare it. Their Master had friends in Jerusalem, but some prudence was needed in the choice of the house where he would celebrate the feast. He probably chose the house of some old friend, where, perhaps, he had in former times eaten many a joyous passover with his mother and cousins; for in solemn hours we choose rather to be in familiar places than strange ones. "The good man of the house," he said, "will show you a large upper room, furnished and prepared; there make ready."

On this day the evening sacrifice was offered about half-past two, immediately after which the slaying of the passover began. Probably the disciples were in the first division of those who brought their lambs; for at the fall of evening, as soon as the stars shone in the sky, the feast was ready. Christ had been lingering on Olivet, where the hymns and hallelujahs from the temple might reach his ear, with the blast of the silver trumpets which told that the Paschal lamb was slain. But as the evening drew on, he descended the mount with his disciples, and entered the city unobserved in the twilight. Most likely Judas did not know till then at what house the passover was to be eaten, and he had not yet found the convenient season he was seeking.

The preoccupation of the people freed the little group of men from observation, as well as the twilight which was darkening the streets. Every Jew must eat the passover that night, in his best and festive garments. Many of those who had been latest in the temple were hurrying homewards with the lamb that had yet to be roasted for the supper. All of them were too much engrossed in the celebration of the feast to give more than a passing thought to the band of Galileans, but dimly seen, who were



PREACHING TO THE MULTITUDE.—LUKE 21 : 9.



"THIS IS MY BLOOD OF THE NEW TESTAMENT, WHICH IS SHED FOR MANY."—MATT. 26-28.

following the prophet of Nazareth through the streets. None were with him save the twelve apostles. Lazarus, whom he had called from the dead, Mary, his mother; his kinsmen from Nazareth were not there. In some other guest-chamber, under another roof, they would keep the feast that night; they had seen him for the last time, until they saw him again next morning on the way to Calvary.

It was still early in the evening when they reached the large upper chamber, where the feast was prepared for them. It was enjoined that the Paschal supper should not be eaten standing, as slaves eat their food; but that all, even the poorest, must sit down leaning, as free men, who have time to feast. Again, four cups of wine must be drunk, though money must be had out of the poor-box for its purchase. No one was allowed to eat after the evening sacrifice until this meal was ready, that all might come to it with a hearty appetite. It was a festival for gladness; a solemn day of joy; and hymns of praises were to be sung.

Jesus was the head of this company, and he took the first cup of wine into his hand, and gave thanks over it; then passing it to his disciples, he said, "Take this, and divide it among yourselves; for I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come." This was the beginning of the feast. After it, all were enjoined to wash their hands, before the Paschal meal of bitter herbs, unleavened bread, and the passover lamb was eaten. It was now that the Lord rose from the supper, and laid aside the white festive robe he was wearing, and pouring water into a basin, washed and wiped the feet of his disciples. There had been a strife amongst them again as to which should be the greatest; or, probably, which should have the chief places at the table. To see him rise, and thus minister to them, filled them with shame; but Peter alone ventured to protest against it. "Thou shalt never wash my feet!" he cried, impulsively. But when Christ said, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," he prayed, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head!" "He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet," answered Jesus; "and ye are clean, *but not all*." It was the first word of heaviness at the thought of the traitor, whose feet he had washed with the rest. Sitting down again to the table, he bade them do as he had done to them, and remember that the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. "I speak not of you all," he added: "I know whom I have chosen. The scripture must be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

This heart-heaviness deepened as the feast went on; the voice of Judas mingling in the hymns of praise—for he dared not be silent—must have jarred upon the ear of Jesus. He broke one of the cakes of unleavened bread, and distributed it, with the bitter herbs, to his disciples, saying plainly to them, "One of you shall betray me." At last, then, they knew that the traitor was amongst the twelve. This filled them with surprise and exceeding sorrow; and they not only began to inquire among themselves who it should be, but every one of them, even Judas, said to him, "Lord, is it I?" Jesus was himself greatly troubled in spirit, and the joyousness which should have marked the feast fled, and was succeeded by a heavy gloom. The youngest of the disciples, John, was reclining next to his beloved Master, near enough to whisper to him unheard by the others. Peter beckoned to him to ask who the traitor was, and Jesus said, "He to whom I shall give this sop, when I have dipped it." He was then dipping portions of the unleavened cake into a preparation of raisins and dates, mixed with vinegar, and distributing them to the apostles. He gave it to Judas, who just then was asking him, "Master, is it I?" There was nothing in the action to call attention to the guilty man; but John knew certainly, and Peter guessed, that it was he who was about to betray his Lord.

The supper was only just beginning; and Judas considered the present opportunity to be too good to be lost, even though he should miss the Paschal meal. Jesus was within the walls of the city, with none but his little band of apostles around him. Moreover, he now felt sure that his treachery was suspected, if not known; and he must succeed at once, if he wished to succeed at all. He rose from the table whilst they were still in excitement as to who was the traitor among them. Such a movement, so suspicious and unaccountable, must have increased their excitement, and probably have caused an attempt at interfering with him, if Jesus had not said to him, "That thou doest, do quickly." They supposed something had been forgotten that was necessary for the feast, or that there was some poor person who depended upon their assistance to celebrate it; and that Judas would return in time to partake of the Paschal lamb. "Do it quickly," Jesus said. No doubt the guilty and miserable man hurried along the streets, now dark, but with the ringing notes of the hallelujah sounding from every house as he passed by, the only Jew in the city who did not eat the passover that night.

The moment the traitor was gone, Jesus recovered his serene composure.

He spoke to his disciples tenderly; though when Peter boasted that he would lay down his life for him, he forewarned him that he would that very night deny him thrice. The supper was almost over, the lamb was eaten, when Jesus, taking into his hands the third cup of wine, called the cup of blessing, said, "Drink ye all of it. This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." He did not partake of it himself, and he repeated what he had said at the beginning of the feast, that he would drink no more of the fruit of the vine until they drank it with him in his Father's kingdom.

He then addressed to them words of surpassing tenderness, beginning with, "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me." Thomas put in a doubtful question; Philip, who had been so long with him, asked him to show to them the Father of whom he spoke; and Judas, his cousin, once more inquired why he did not manifest himself to the world; but for each he had only a gentle reproof that could not grieve them. He promised them all a Comforter, who should never leave them, as he was leaving them. There was not now much time for him to talk with them. The prince of this world was coming. "Arise," he said, as though he would not have Judas find him lingering in the guest chamber; "let us go hence."

But still, as though reluctant to break up that loving circle, he lingered amongst them, to speak more comforting words, calling them no longer his disciples, but his friends. Possibly he shrank from quitting that quiet upper room for the scene of the mysterious agony that was coming. His work was almost finished; there was nothing for him now to do, save to suffer. No more blind eyes would he open; no more deaf ears unstop. The leper would not come to him for cleansing, nor the lame and palsystriken crowd about him to be healed. Neither would he teach any more by parables. The next crowd of faces surrounding him would not be those of eager listeners or faithful friends. How bitter the next few hours would be, he knew already. He lifted up his eyes and prayed; yet not for himself, but for those whom his Father had given him out of the world.

The last cup of the passover was now taken by the disciples, and the last hymn sung. Then they went down into the streets, echoing with the songs of those who kept the feast. The full moon flooded them with light; and the little company, feeling safer perhaps as they left the city walls behind them, crossed the brook Kedron, and passed on into the garden of

Gethsemane, where their Master was wont to lead them often. They were on Olivet again, near their places of refuge; and their hearts were lighter than whilst they were in the city. There was not much danger here.

CHAPTER IV.

Gethsemane.

BUT what had hindered Judas all this time? Jesus had not hastened from the guest-chamber to escape from his treachery. It was no great distance to the high-priest's palace, or to the temple, where there were guards on duty. But all were occupied in celebrating the passover, and none could sit down to it earlier than the Lord seems to have done. They must keep the feast first; the murder must be committed afterwards.

As soon, however, as the feast was over, the temple guards hurried to their task. Possibly Judas may have discovered before they started that Jesus had left the city already, and it became necessary to procure a detachment of Roman soldiers from the tower of Antonia, overlooking the temple. The plea that they were about to arrest a dangerous leader, popular with the multitude, who must be taken by night, readily secured their aid. As the soldiers and the temple guard passed through the streets, a number of fanatical Pharisees, armed with swords and staves, joined them; a few even of the chief priests and elders were there. Judas probably counselled them to carry also torches and lanterns; for, though the moon was at the full, there were dark and gloomy shades in the garden, where Jesus might escape from their search.

In the meanwhile Jesus, having left most of his disciples in the open part of the garden, had taken with him Peter, and James, and John, and withdrawn into the more distant and darker glades, as Judas had foreseen. "Tarry ye here," he said to his favorite friends, "whilst I go and pray yonder." It was no solitary mountain by the lake of Galilee, such as had been his place of prayer the last passover night. But he must be alone; no one must be too near to him in that hour of agony. A mysterious anguish, a sorrow like no other sorrow, was crushing him down. A degrading and painful doom was at hand; but first his soul must be poured out unto death. He had been despised and rejected of men: but now he was to be bruised for the iniquities of the world, wounded for its transgressions, put to grief

by God. Even he began to be sore amazed at the profound gloom spreading over his soul. "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death," he said to his disciples.

Withdrawing from them about a stone's cast, he fell on the ground, and prayed that if it were possible, this hour might pass from him. "Abba, Father," he cried, "all things are possible to thee; take away this cup from me; nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." But, restless in his great anguish, Jesus returned to his three friends, whom he had left sitting under the trees, and found them sleeping. He said to Peter, "Simon, sleepest thou? couldst thou not watch with me one hour?" Then he added gently, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

Back into the solitude and gloom he went again to suffer alone the unutterable agony. None could help him to bear that burden. He prayed more earnestly. "Oh, my Father, if this cup may not pass from me, except I drink it, thy will be done." Then, returning to seek some sympathy with his disciples, he found them again asleep, and they knew not what to say, except that their eyes were heavy. Now utterly alone, conscious that these, his dearest friends, could take no part in his sorrow, he went away the third time, and prayed, saying the same words. At last one angel, one alone of all the heavenly host that sang at his birth, appeared to him, strengthening him to endure that anguish worse than death.

Strong enough now to meet the bitter end, Jesus came the last time to his sleeping disciples. Waking them, he said, "The hour is come. Lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand." Even as he spoke, before they had time to shake off their drowsiness and bewilderment, they heard the tramp of many feet coming near, and saw the glimmering of torches among the trees. Jesus went forward to meet the band of soldiers, asking, "Whom seek ye?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. "I am he," he said, calmly. There was something in his manner which so overawed them that they shrank back from him, and recoiling upon the crowd that pressed behind, cast some of them to the ground. But as they recovered themselves Judas came to the front, and too familiar to be swayed as they had been by the hidden majesty and the sacred dignity of great sorrow in his Lord, he stepped forth and kissed him, saying, "Master, Master!" It was the sign he had given to those who were come to arrest Jesus. "Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he: hold him fast, and take him away safely." "Judas," asked his Master, marvelling at the depth of his villany, "betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?"

Still the temple guards hesitated to seize him. They had heard his teachings, and seen his miracles in the temple, and possibly they were afraid lest he should work by his miraculous power against them. There was something terrible about a man who could make the dead obey, or could convey himself away unseen amid a throng of foes. They were reluctant to lay hands upon Jesus, though the traitor, who had kissed him, still stood before them unhurt. "Whom seek ye?" he asked, again. "Jesus of Nazareth," they repeated. "I have told ye that I am he," he answered; "if therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." His three disciples were probably hemmed in by the multitude, and the rest were looking on, terrified, from behind. Peter, with reckless desperation, drew a sword, and striking wildly, smote a servant of the high-priest, and cut off his ear. Jesus rebuked him, and healed the man; his last miracle, wrought upon an enemy at the moment he was betrayed into their hands. He was yet free to do good: but now the captain and the temple guard laid hold of him and bound him. "Are ye come out as against a thief?" he asked, indignantly, yet patiently. "I was daily with you in the temple, and ye took me not. But this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Seeing that he suffered himself to be bound, and that no legion of angels came to deliver him, all the disciples, even Peter, even John, forsook him, and fled. None of his twelve apostles remained near to him but Judas.

Scattered were the disciples, every man fleeing where his fears led him. Some, perhaps, sought a secret and safe retreat among the farmhouses on Olivet; some returned to the city tremblingly, to convey the bitter news to the other friends of Christ. Mary, his mother, with her sister, and many other women from Galilee, were lodging in Jerusalem during the feast, and would quickly hear what had come to pass. His cousins, who had been so long in believing on him; his secret disciples, such as Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea; all must have felt that no common danger, no slight catastrophe, was at hand. There was one hope still in his favor. The Jews had not the power to put him to death legally; and even if they had, their traditions laid it down as a law, that whenever a criminal was condemned to die, he should not be executed on the same day as that when the verdict was passed, and that the judgment should be reconsidered by the great Sanhedrim on the day following. Jesus could not in any case be put to death before the first day of the week: and in the mean time heaven and earth must be moved to deliver him out of the hands of his adversaries. He had a powerful party in his favor; and it was never difficult to stir up

a popular agitation during the feasts. The dark hours of the night passed by too rapidly as they consulted together concerning what must be done.

CHAPTER V.

The High-Priest's Palace.

ALONE, save for Judas, bound, followed by a rabble of scoffing partisans of the chief priests and elders, Jesus was led away from the garden of Gethsemane. The guards took him first to the house of Annas, the father-in-law of the high-priest, a haughty and powerful man. The chief offices of the temple were filled by members of his family, who were all Sadducees, and had not been vehemently opposed to Christ until his influence with the people began to threaten their own, and to endanger the revenues of the temple, from which they drew their wealth. Annas, who was an old man, probably did not trouble himself to see the prisoner at that hour of the night, but sent him on to the palace of Caiaphas, the high-priest, where the Great Sanhedrim would assemble as soon as they could be summoned from their various homes.

By this time Peter and John had fallen in with one another; and recovering somewhat from the panic that had seized them, they followed their Master to the high-priest's house. John knew Caiaphas so well as to find easy admittance into his palace, and he went in with Jesus, as near to him as he could get, that he might see that his beloved disciple had not altogether forsaken him. But Peter had been unable to get in, and after a while John went and spoke for him to the woman who kept the door, and brought him into the open court of the palace.

The chief priests and elders, who had gone out to Gethsemane with the officers and soldiers, now formed themselves into a preliminary council to examine Jesus, before the Great Sanhedrim could meet. Caiaphas was at the head of it, and asked him of his disciples and doctrine. As to his disciples Jesus said nothing, but about his doctrine he answered, "I spoke openly to the world; I ever taught in the synagogue and the temple, whither the Jews always resort; and in secret have I said nothing. Why askest thou me? ask them which heard me." Most of those who were present had heard him in the temple; the guards had once said, "Never man spake like this man." But now one of them struck him for answering

the high-priest so. It was yet an hour or two before daybreak, at which time the Sanhedrim was to assemble, and it would seem that Caiaphas at this time left Christ to the wicked cruelties of his servants. Probably they led him from the hall, where this brief examination had taken place, into the open court, when they blindfolded him, and striking him on the face, cried mockingly, "Prophecy, who is it that smote thee?" Other insults they heaped upon him, with the rude brutality of men who knew that they should not offend their masters by such misconduct.

It was a chilly night, and the servants had kindled a fire in the court, Peter standing with them to warm himself. Before his Master was brought out to be mocked and insulted, one of the maids of the high-priest, looking at him, said, "Thou also wert with Jesus of Nazareth." He was instantly and naturally filled with fear, and denied it at once, saying, "I do not understand what thou sayest. I am not one of his disciples." He felt it to be wisest to withdraw from the circle round the fire, and retreated into the darkness of the porch. It was already drawing near to daybreak, for a cock crew as he stood in the gateway. Then the woman who kept the door asked him again, "Art thou not one of this man's disciples?" "I am not," he replied shortly. Once more feeling nowhere safe, yet reluctant to quit the palace, he returned into the court, where, it may be, his Lord was now standing, bearing in silence the cruelties of the servants. A kinsman of Malchus, whose ear he had cut off in Gethsemane, soon asked him, "Did not I see thee in the garden with him?" They that stood by said confidently, "Surely thou art one of them, for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech betrayeth thee." Then Peter began to curse and to swear, "I know not this man of whom ye speak." His Lord, who heard his oaths, turned, and looked upon him, and he remembered the word he had spoken, "Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice." He had not believed himself so cowardly and disloyal. Even now he dared not stand forth and own himself a disciple of the mocked and despised prophet of Nazareth; but creeping away from the palace, with that last look of his Master haunting him, he went out into the dawning of the day, and wept bitterly. Worse than the insults of the servants must have been the vehement denials of his disciple, and Peter could not fail to remember the awful saying, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me, and of my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels."

By daybreak the Sanhedrim were assembled, and Jesus was brought.



CHRIST IN THE GARDEN.

"AND HE WENT FORWARD A LITTLE, AND FELL ON THE GROUND, AND PRAYED."—MARK 14: 35.



"BEHOLD THE MAN."—JOHN 19:5.

before them. They had all been seeking witnesses against him, but none could be found whose witness agreed. It was necessary that at least two should agree. After a while there came forward two men, one of whom testified he had heard him say, "I will destroy this temple, that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands." The accusation took a more doubtful form with the other witness, "I am able to destroy this temple of God, and to build it in three days." Even this testimony did not agree sufficiently. Neither the high-priest, nor the Sanhedrim, eager as they were to convict him, could be satisfied to do so on such paltry evidence. Jesus was standing before them, questioning nothing, answering nothing; giving them no chance of fastening upon any indiscreet words. The scene altogether must have been unutterably painful to him, apart from his own position. The great religious body of the nation, the most learned in the law, the most irreproachable in character, the men presumed to be the wisest and best of the nation, were shamelessly seeking evidence by which they might condemn to death a prophet, of whom no man knew any evil.

At last Caiaphas stood up in the midst, in his office as high-priest, and adjured Christ by the living God to tell them whether he was the Messiah, the Son of God. "I am," he replied; "and ye shall see the Son of man on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." There was no further need of perjured witnesses. All had heard the awful words. Caiaphas rent his clothes, crying, "He hath spoken blasphemy! What think ye?" With one voice they all declared him to be worthy of death.

Jesus knew when he uttered these words that he was pronouncing his own sentence. Until that question was asked him he had been dumb, opening not his mouth. But the form in which the question was put left him no choice but to answer. The moment in which he most distinctly claimed to be the Christ, the Son of God, was the moment when such a claim was his death-knell. Until now he had left his works to speak for him. Even with his disciples he had seldom insisted on being the Messiah; he had never held himself aloof from them in kingly state. With them he was the Son of man, their brother; before the Sanhedrim he called himself the Son of God, their Judge.

CHAPTER VI.

Pilate's Judgment Hall.

STRAIGHTWAY, in the light of the rising sun, the whole multitude of them arose, and led Jesus away to Pilate's judgment-hall. It was early, and the city would hardly be astir after the feast last night. The friends of Jesus were still buoyed up with the thought that, at the earliest, the crime of his death could not be committed until after the Sabbath was ended. The haste of the Sanhedrim was not only indecent, but it was illegal, according to their own traditions. They had taken no time to reconsider their verdict. The judges had not fasted for a whole day, as they were bound to do after sentencing a man to death before he was led away to execution. The death of Christ was a judicial murder of the blackest dye.

But at the threshold of Pilate's judgment-hall a difficulty presented itself. If they entered it they would be defiled, and could not partake of the feast of that day. On this day the Chagigah was offered, which was strictly a peace-offering, and symbolized their unbroken and undimmed communion with God. A portion of the offering was burnt upon the altar, and a portion eaten as a feast in the temple itself, or, at least, within the walls of Jerusalem. Probably the Great Sanhedrim kept this feast in some stately chamber of the temple; for did not they stand nearer to God than any other of the people? But if they went into Pilate's judgment-hall with their prisoner they would be defiled, and rendered unfit for its celebration.

Pilate had had many a serious conflict with the Jews on subjects of their religion, which he despised and misunderstood; yet he now yielded so far as to go out to these wealthy and noble citizens. "What accusation bring ye against this man?" he asked. They did not wish to make any definite accusation, and they answered sharply, that if he had not been an evil-doer, they would not have taken the trouble to deliver him up to him. "Take him yourselves," said Pilate, "and judge him according to your law." "It is not lawful for us to put any man to death," they said.

No doubt Pilate knew already something of Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth, who had entered the city in what appeared to him a mock triumph only five days before. This reply of the Sanhedrim showed him at once what they wanted. The prophet must be put to death, and he must bear

the blame of it. But upon what grounds was he to crucify this man? The Sanhedrim were not at a loss, though they could say nothing here of the charge of blasphemy. "We found him," said these religious rulers of the country, "we found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, saying that he is Christ, a King." All there must have known how Jesus had disappointed his followers by bidding them render unto Cæsar the things that were Cæsar's. Pilate returned to the judgment-hall, and looked upon the weary frame and worn face of him who all night long had been passing through agony after agony. He still wore the festive robes in which he had eaten of the Paschal supper; but even these were only the clothing of a poor man, a man of the people, not those of any kingly pretender. "Art thou the King of the Jews?" he asked. The Roman governor seems to have felt kindly towards him, as a harmless fanatic, whose vague language had brought him into danger. Jesus told him he had indeed a kingdom, but it was not of this world. True men alone could hear his voice. "What is truth?" asked Pilate, mockingly. He had not found it among the Romans; and certainly it did not exist among the Jews. He could not but suspect the whole charge against Jesus to be a skilfully-framed falsehood. But he was prepossessed in his favor, and more than willing to disappoint his accusers. He left Jesus, and went out again to the pavement, or terrace, before his palace. By this time a rabble of citizens had gathered, among whom the partisans of the Sanhedrim were scattered, artfully exciting them against Jesus, as one who had deceived the people and threatened to destroy the temple. Probably a small number of his friends were also among the crowd, bewildered and shocked to find their Master handed over to the Roman power. But when Pilate was seen all were still; a few in breathless hope, the many in silent hatred.

"I find in him no fault at all," said the governor. A thrill of great joy must have run through the heart of John, who had followed his Lord faithfully. But a fierce clamor began; and the chief priests would not suffer their accusation to fall to the ground.

"He stirreth up the people," they cried, "teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee, even to this place."

Here was a loop-hole for Pilate to escape from his difficulty. If Jesus came from Galilee, he belonged to Herod's jurisdiction. Herod was come up to the passover; and Pilate would pay him a compliment by referring the case to him. They were not friends at this moment, probably because of

those Galileans whom Pilate had slain during one of the riots at some feast; but the Roman governor was anxious to be at peace with him. He therefore sent Jesus to Herod, who had for a long time wished to see the famous prophet of his own country, whose miracles were noised abroad so much. The priests and scribes violently accused him before Herod; but Jesus spoke not a word. He had never before seen the face of the man who had murdered John the Baptist in prison; and none of his questions would he answer, though he answered Pilate's. But even Herod dared not condemn him to death on charges so frivolous and false as those urged against him. He had already exasperated his people by John's assassination, and he could not venture to return to Galilee stained with the blood of Jesus. Yet he would not offend the Sanhedrim by releasing the prisoner; and he determined to send him again to Pilate. But to gratify his own paltry pique and disappointment, and to cast ridicule upon Christ, he arrayed him in a gorgeous robe, and joined with his men of war in mocking him, before sending him back.

Pilate was troubled by the return of the prisoner and his accusers. He knew that the leading men of the nation were unfriendly to him. They had already succeeded in bringing him into difficulties with his emperor, and they were eager to have him disgraced and removed. Yet he shrank from the injustice of putting Jesus to death. There was one chance left in an appeal to the people, who had so lately assisted in his triumphal entry in Jerusalem. He called them together, with the chief priests and elders, and said, "Ye have brought this man unto me, as one that perverteth the people, and, behold, I, having examined him, find no fault in him at all, concerning those things whereof ye accuse him; no, nor yet Herod, for I sent you to him, and lo, nothing worthy of death is found in him. I will therefore chastise him and let him go."

It had of late years been the custom of the governor to allow the people at this feast to choose a prisoner, whom they would, who was immediately set free. There was a notorious man lying in prison at this time, guilty of robbery, sedition, and murder. The chief priests suggested to them that they should choose Barabbas. A loud uproar was made, all crying out at once, "Away with this man, and release unto us Barabbas." But Pilate, still willing to save Jesus, yet desirous to sneer at the accusations made by the Sanhedrim, asked them, "Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews?" The taunt irritated the mob, and they shouted, "Crucify him; crucify him." "Why, what evil hath he done?" pleaded

Pilate. But they cried out the more exceedingly, with loud voices, "Crucify him."

Yet still Pilate seems to have had a lingering hope that the punishment of scourging, which was at once most painful and degrading, might satisfy their enmity. He delivered Christ to his soldiers, who platted a crown of thorns, and put a reed into his hand as a sceptre; he was still wearing the gorgeous robe in which Herod had sent him back to Pilate, and thus, after he had been scourged, he was brought forth for the mob to see him. "Behold the man," said Pilate. It was he whom they had seen healing the lame and blind in the temple, and to whom they had listened gladly not long ago; for it was amongst the poorest and most wretched of the people that his mighty works had been wrought. But at the sight of him a maddened yell arose, "Away with him! away with him! crucify him! crucify him!" Their violence prevailed. But Pilate still shrank from taking upon himself the guilt of such a crime against justice. He had just received a message from his wife: "Have thou nothing to do with that just man; for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him." He may not have been superstitious, but he felt it would be painful to return to her stained with the blood of an innocent man for whom she had interceded, with no other excuse than that the people of Jerusalem were too strong for him. "Take ye him, and crucify him, for I find no fault in him," he said.

This did not suit the priestly party at all. Their law did not permit of crucifixion, and they were bent upon this degrading punishment. Neither did they wish to incur the odium of bloodshed, though they did not shrink from the guilt of it. In their anxiety to urge Pilate on, they forgot for a moment their political charge against Jesus, and returned to their religious accusation. "He made himself the Son of God," they cried, "and by our law he ought to die." Upon this Pilate returned into the judgment-hall, and had Jesus brought again to him. "Whence art thou?" he asked. But he was silent; and Pilate, astonished and somewhat indignant at his silence, reminded him that he had power to release him or to crucify him. This was no longer true. He had lost his power by not exerting it at once and he felt it. He could not let Jesus go now, without stirring up a riot of a desperate character in Jerusalem. Jesus answered him in words almost of sympathy, that he could have no power at all against him, unless it had been permitted; and that his sin was small compared with that of the Sanhedrim.

Again Pilate sought to release him. But the people cried out, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar." This cry at once sealed the doom of Christ. Pilate ordered his judgment-seat to be set on the pavement before the judgment-hall. When Jesus came forth again, he said, "Behold your King!" A wilder shout than ever rang in the ears of Christ: the shouts of those for whom he had spent his life. "What, shall I crucify your King?" asked Pilate. "We have no king but Cæsar," answered the chief priests.

Then fearing, and seeing that he could not prevail against fanatics who could utter such an answer, Pilate took water, and washed his hands before the multitude.

"I am innocent of the blood of this just person," he said; "see ye to it."

"His blood be on us, and on our children," answered all the people.

CHAPTER VII.

Calvary.

NO time was lost between the passing of the verdict and the execution of it. The cross was ready; and two thieves were only waiting for this trial to close before they met their punishment. Calvary was not far from Pilate's palace; it was only just beyond the city walls, near the highway leading from one of the gates. Christ was in the hands of the Roman soldiers; but the chief priests and elders could not trust them to do their work unwatched. The cross was laid upon him, but he was too feeble and worn-out to bear it; and when he sank under it, the soldiers seized upon a man, coming in from the country, and him they compelled to carry the cross to Calvary. Whether the man was a disciple or not, we are not told: but no doubt there were many disciples by this time mingling with the crowd, who would willingly have borne the cross after Jesus. There were many women among the people, who bewailed and lamented him openly; daughters of Jerusalem, who had not turned against him as the fickle mob had done. Possibly it was when he sank under the weight of his cross that their lamentation broke out most loudly; and Jesus turned to them, and said, "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves, and for your children." The fate of the guilty city was heavier to him than his cross. It

was still early in the day; about the hour when the morning sacrifice was offered. He was nailed upon the cross; and as it was lifted and let fall into the hole prepared for it, a moment of extreme torture, he cried, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do." After this was done, the four soldiers, whose duty it was to watch under the cross until the person upon it was dead, began their usual custom of dividing the clothing among them. A title also was brought to be put over the head of the criminal, giving his name and crime. Pilate had sent for the cross of Christ, written in Hebrew, and Greek, and Latin, so that all should be able to read it, this title, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It irritated and offended the chief priests; but Pilate would not have it altered into "He said, I am the King of the Jews."

The haste with which the trial and the execution had been hurried on makes it probable that not many of the Galileans knew of the arrest of their prophet. Some of them possibly knew nothing of it until they heard that he was dead. But as the terrible tidings ran through the city, those who heard it would speed to Calvary with despair in their hearts, to find him whom they loved and trusted in hanging upon a cross between two thieves, with a circle of enemies around him, even of chief priests and elders, mocking at him and jibing him. The soldiers at the foot casting lots over that priestly robe of his, which his mother had woven without seam; and the title over his head, "Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews:" the unclouded sun, growing hotter and hotter every minute, shining down upon all the fearful scene, as it was shining on their own beloved lake and hills of Galilee.

John had been near him all the time. Now three women forced their way through the circle of mocking priests; Mary, his mother, Mary Cleophas, her sister, and Mary of Magdalene. Other women from Galilee stood afar off, watching through the weary hours. Peter, perhaps, was somewhere on the outskirts of the crowd, seeing, though not daring to go near him, whom he had denied thrice. Possibly Judas himself was drawn thither, against his will, to look once more on him whom he had betrayed with a kiss.

The sun shone hot and clear. When they brought Jesus to the place of execution, they had offered to him a drugged draught, which was given to criminals to dull their sense of pain; but having tasted thereof, he would not drink. He could see, and hear, and feel as keenly as when he had been in his quiet home in Nazareth. The mocking faces of the chief priests; the unconcerned faces of the soldiers; the soul-stricken face of his mother;

his eyes rested upon, as they looked up to him from below. His ears heard the jeering of the people as they went to and fro along the highway, reviling him, and saying, "Ah! thou that destroyest the temple!" Now and then the blast of the silver trumpets and the voice of song from the temple reached him. After a while the first pangs of bodily pain had dulled a little; and he could again show his compassion and tenderness for others. The thieves hanging, where James and John had wished to sit, the one on his right hand, the other on his left, had reviled him as well as his enemies. "If thou be the Christ, save thyself and us," they cried. But one of them, lifting up his dim eyes to the face of Christ, and to the title above his head, saw that it was Jesus of Nazareth who was suffering death with them. "Dost thou not fear God?" he cried to his fellow-thief, "seeing thou art in the same condemnation. And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this man hath done nothing amiss." Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews! There was one, even here, ready to own him King. "Lord," said the dying thief, "remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." "Verily I say unto thee, to-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," answered Jesus. Before the sun, which was now beating upon the shameful crosses where they hung, had gone down into the western sea, both of them would be in Paradise! His mother heard him say it as she stood beneath his cross.

But Jesus knew his worst anguish was yet to come, worse than the pain he felt in his body, or the bitterness of the contempt poured upon him, and he would not have his mother witness it. She had borne much, and perhaps could not bear more, and live. We can well believe no other being on earth was so dear to him. None had shared his whole life as she had done; none could understand him, and his purpose, so well. Did he not remember their home in Nazareth, where the peaceful, monotonous days followed one another so quietly that she had almost forgotten whose son he was? All was over between them now: there was but one more duty for him to discharge: one more look for her to take of her son Jesus. John stood near to her: his youngest and best beloved disciple. Looking down upon them, with his matchless tenderness, he said to her, "Woman, behold thy son." "Behold thy mother!" he said to John. She looked up to him as his failing, loving voice fell upon her ear: and she understood him, and his love, better than she had ever done before. The look that passed between them was their farewell. John led her away from the cross to his own dwelling-place; and the last earthly care was gone from the heart of Jesus.



CHRIST BEARING HIS CROSS.

"AND HE BEARING HIS CROSS WENT FORTH INTO A PLACE CALLED THE PLACE OF A
SKULL."—JOHN 19: 17.



CHRIST CRUCIFIED.

"AND JESUS SAID, FATHER, FORGIVE THEM; FOR THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO."—LUKE 23:34.

About noon a strange gloom spread over those skies, usually so blue and cloudless. There was darkness over all the land until the hour for the evening sacrifice. Probably the crowd melted away in fear of a coming tempest, or in dread of the inexplicable obscurity ; and we do not find that the chief priests lingered longer on Calvary. An extraordinary anguish, a mysterious darkness, as of despair, filled the heart and mind of Christ. His soul, which in Gethsemane had been sorrowful even unto death, was now poured out unto death. He had borne the mockery of the people, had seen them stare upon him with cruel eyes, and heard their roaring against him. But now God seemed to hide his face from him, and to hearken no longer to his cry. This he could not bear ; his heart was breaking under this sorrow. He cried with a loud voice, which rang mournfully through the darkness, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?" There were still about the cross some Jews who could make jest of this awful cry. They knew Elias was to come to prepare the way for the Messiah, and they said, "Behold, he calleth Elias !" Jesus, whose last moment was at hand, and whose throat was parched, cried, "I thirst." One of them, touched with pity, ran and took a sponge, and, filling it with vinegar, lifted it to his mouth on a reed. But the rest cried, "Let him be ; let us see whether Elias will come to save him, and to take him down."

It was now the hour of the evening sacrifice. Once again Christ was heard to say, "It is finished." Then with a loud voice, he cried, "Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit." He bowed his head and died. He gave up his spirit, bruised and tormented, and poured out unto death, into his Father's hands.

CHAPTER VIII.

In the Grave.

AT the third hour, when Jesus was dying on Calvary, the priest was offering up incense in the holy place of the temple. All the congregation, and the sacrificing priest in the outer court, were waiting for him to reappear. Suddenly an earthquake shook both the temple mount and the whole city of Jerusalem. The veil, which separated the holy place from the holiest of holies, was rent in two, from the top to the bottom, laying open the sacred spot, which none ever entered except the high-priest on the Day of Atonement.

On Calvary, those who had gathered to see the sight were at last terrified, and returned to the city, smiting upon their breasts. The centurion in command of the Roman soldiers, who had probably watched and listened to the dying prophet with interest, was struck with fear, and said, "Truly this was the Son of God!"

But before sunset, the Pharisees, always very scrupulous not to break the law, came to Pilate, and besought him that all three of those who were being crucified should be put to death at once, because the next day was a Sabbath, and their bodies ought not to be hanging on the crosses on the Sabbath day. The soldiers were ordered to despatch the dying men by breaking their legs; but when they came to Jesus, and found that he was dead already, they refrained from mutilating his body; yet, lest any spark of life lingered which might be fanned into a flame, one of them pierced his side with a spear. Thus they made sure that he was dead.

In the meantime another applicant had gone to Pilate. This was Joseph of Arimathea, a well-known man, rich, honorable, and good, one of the Sanhedrim itself, though he had not consented to the death of Christ. He was a timid man, and a secret disciple; but shocked by the deeds of his fellow-councillors, he went boldly in to Pilate, and begged that he might take away the body of Jesus. Pilate marvelled whether he were yet dead, and called the centurion to ask him if it were so. He then willingly granted the body to Joseph, who had already provided himself with fine linen for the entombment. When he returned to Calvary, Nicodemus accompanied him, bringing a large quantity of spices. The women from Galilee were lingering about the place; and now, in the cool and gloom of the evening, they took the body down from the cross, and wrapped it, with the spices scattered amid the folds, in the linen cloth. Close by was a garden belonging to Joseph, and in it a new tomb, which he had hewn for himself in the midst of his garden. No man had ever lain in it. No taint of death polluted it. Here they buried their Lord hastily, for the Sabbath was near. Mary Cleophas and Mary Magdalene sat close by, watching, but perhaps too overcome with grief to give any active assistance. The women from Galilee also saw the sepulchre, and how his body was lain. Then all of them returned to the city, to prepare spices and ointments for the embalming of the corpse as soon as the Sabbath was over.

The enemies of Christ had not been prepared for this honorable burial of their victim. If Joseph of Arimathea had not interfered, his body would have been carried away from Calvary, with those of the thieves, and care-

lessly laid in a common grave, where criminals, who had died a shameful death, were flung together. The followers of Jesus, poor obscure Galileans, could not have had influence enough to save the corpse from this degrading fate. But the Sanhedrim found that two of their own chief men, startled by their fierceness and injustice into open discipleship, had interposed promptly to claim the body of their Lord, and to lay it in the new tomb of a rich man, amidst the cool and quiet fragrance of a garden, where those who loved him might visit his resting-place unnoticed and unmolested.

The Sabbath was come; a high day. The Sabbath of the passover was no doubt the most important of all the weekly Sabbaths in the year. The immense multitudes that thronged Jerusalem, and dwelt even in tents outside the walls, because there was not room enough in the city, filled the temple courts, and crowded into the synagogues. Sabbath days were especially days of feasting and rejoicing with the Jews; friends met together; no work at all was done; both men and women were dressed in their best apparel, and desired to see and to be seen. Probably, too, this Sabbath fell upon the day for waving the first-fruits before Jehovah. At the hour when Christ was buried, a sheaf of standing corn had been reaped with special rites for the purpose in a field near Jerusalem; and possibly this ceremony had been one reason why Joseph and Nicodemus had been left undisturbed in their burial of the body.

How the friends of Jesus passed this mournful day we can only faintly imagine. Whether there was any brighter hope, or more perfect understanding, in Mary's mind of what was to follow, we do not know. But the rest were insensible to every consolation; they forgot altogether the words Jesus had spoken to them about rising again. They had so long refused to believe that he would give himself up to death that now they were too stunned to remember that he had promised to return to them.

But Christ's enemies did not forget this. Towards the close of the Sabbath the chief priests and leading Pharisees came together to Pilate. One tremor had seized upon them in their hour of triumph. "Sir, we remember," they said, "that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first." Pilate cared little for any error, but he could not afford to offend the chief priests. "Ye have a watch," he answered, "go your way, make it as sure as ye can." The watch

consisted of Roman soldiers, not of the temple guard, who, as Jews, could not touch a sepulchre without being defiled. The soldiers made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone; and when the watch was set, the priests and Pharisees went their way, satisfied that no second error could arise to deceive the people. It was the Sabbath, and therefore it was unlawful to touch the dead, or they might have removed the body to the common grave of executed criminals.

No doubt there must have been much discussion that day throughout Jerusalem. None of these things which had come to pass were done in a corner, in some remote place in Galilee, but in the holy city itself, during the passover week. Jesus was well known as a prophet of the most blameless life. Every one had heard before, or heard then, of Lazarus, who was probably hiding from the malice of the chief priests and Pharisees. Rumors would run along, from one to another, of the indecent haste with which the execution had been hurried on. The bargain with the traitor would be whispered about; the midnight arrest in Gethsemane; the meeting of the Sanhedrim, not in the temple, but in the high-priest's palace: the early and hasty trial before Pilate, and the swift execution of the sentence: all these would be discussed passionately in favor of, or against Christ, during the leisure of that Sabbath. Thousands among them were disappointed. Those who were not the professed followers of Jesus had been ready to follow him, if he would but make himself intelligible to them. They were longing for a Messiah; and if he had been such a Messiah as they expected, and could understand, they would have joyfully flocked under his banner, and fought for his kingdom. But he, who might have been dwelling in regal splendor under the roof of the royal palace, had been hung upon a shameful cross between two thieves. They had seen the end of Jesus of Nazareth—a bitter, ignominious death. Was he not, then, what the chief rulers of the people called him, a deceiver?

CHAPTER IX.

The Sepulchre.

ON Friday evening, while Joseph and Nicodemus were laying the body of the Lord in the grave, his aunt, Mary Cleophas, and Mary of Magdala were sitting over against the sepulchre, watching. The other women from Galilee also saw the place where he was laid. Probably they

all returned to the city together, to buy spices and ointments for the embalming; and before they separated made arrangements for meeting again early, after the Sabbath was ended. As nothing could be done before day-break, we may easily conjecture that they agreed to meet soon after the dawn, either in the garden itself, or by the city gate nearest to it.

But upon Sunday morning, whilst it was yet dark, over-early or before the appointed time, Mary Magdalene and Mary Cleophas, restless in their sorrow, started off to see the sepulchre beforehand. On their way they were joined by Salome, the mother of John, who was probably staying in the same house as Mary, the mother of Jesus. They had bought sweet spices, but the other women were to bring them to the sepulchre. No light yet shone in the sky, except the first faint gray of the morning in the east. But possibly they may have seen a sudden light gleaming in the direction of the garden, and felt the shock of an earthquake, like that which had rent the rocks on Friday. If so, they would naturally pause for a while, terrified; yet, when all was calm again, and the quiet dawn grew stronger, waking up the birds, whose twittering was the only sound to be heard, they would go on, though troubled and trembling, to the sepulchre.

But what had caused the shock of earthquake? The Roman guard, possibly the same that had watched under the cross, and divided the Lord's garments among them, were already looking forward to being relieved from their watch, when they saw an angel, whose face was like lightning, descend from the dark heavens above them, and they felt the earth quake and tremble beneath their feet. He rolled back the stone from the sepulchre they were guarding: and for fear of him they became as dead men. They saw nothing else than the bright, awful face and the glistening whiteness of the form that sat on the stone near them. They did not see Christ quit his tomb.

By the time the two Marys and Salome reached the garden, the dawn was light enough for them to see objects at some distance. They do not seem to have known of the guard being set to watch the grave; for their talk was only of the difficulty of removing the large stone which filled the opening of the cave. Probably their special purpose in coming to view the sepulchre was to ascertain whether the women alone could roll it away, and effect an entrance without aid. On Friday evening, in the twilight, and overwhelmed as they were with grief, they had not sufficiently noticed this difficulty. Now, as they drew near, what was their amazement and dismay to see the stone already removed, and the cave open!

Their fears sprang to one conclusion, and only one. The beloved body of their Lord had been violently taken away—stolen by his implacable enemies—during the night. It had been still further degraded and dishonored by being cast into the common grave of criminals. Mary Magdalene, leaving the other Mary and Salome, fled back into the city to seek Peter and John, and arouse them to help, if help were not too late. Very probably these two disciples were lodging in the same house; for at the time of the feasts every dwelling in Jerusalem was crowded with guests. "They have taken away the Lord," cried Mary, when she found them, "and we know not where they have laid him."

In the meantime Mary Cleophas and Salome went on to the sepulchre. They were women past middle life, with the calmness and passiveness of years and sorrows, and they did not shrink from entering into the sepulchre. They had set out, indeed, with the intention of preparing the body for a second burial. But there was no lifeless corpse there. They were affrighted, however, by seeing an angel, clothed in white, sitting on the right side. "Fear not," he said to them, "for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here; he is arisen. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly, and tell his disciples and Peter that he is risen from the dead; and behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. Lo, I have told you." Salome and Mary Cleophas fled from the sepulchre trembling and amazed; and probably passing by John and Peter in their bewilderment, they said nothing to them about what they had seen, but went on into the city, in fear and great joy, to bring the disciples word.

Now, when they were going, some, but not all, of the Roman guard hastened to the chief priests, and told them what had come to pass. A council was immediately summoned; and, after much discussion, they seem to have persuaded themselves that the soldiers had been sleeping, and that, as they slept, the disciples had stolen away the body. The guard owned to having been like dead men from fright; and none of them professed to have seen Jesus leave the grave. The council gave them large sums of money to spread about this report, which they did so successfully, that those who thought better of the testimony of two or three heathen soldiers than of that of hundreds of their own countrymen, who had nothing to gain but everything to lose by their testimony, believed the saying, and commonly reported it as a fact.

Very shortly after Salome and Mary Cleophas left the grave, John and

Peter reached it. John had outrun Peter, but with the sensitive shrinking of a young nature, unused to death, he did not go in. Stooping down, he saw the linen clothes, that fine linen Joseph had prepared, lying on the floor of the cave. It was quite evident his Master was not there. But Peter, coming up, stepped at once into the sepulchre, to look round it. There was no sign of haste or violence, as there must have been if a band of rough foes had trampled in to steal away the body. The fair linen cloth was unsoiled, and the napkin that had been bound about the worn and anguished face had been wrapped together, as if his mother's gentle hands had folded it up tenderly, and laid it aside by itself. There was nothing terrifying about the quiet, empty tomb; and John, with all his sensitive love for his Lord, might enter and feel no shock. He also went in, and looking round, felt a gleam of faith, like the dawn of a new and splendid day, breaking upon him. But they could not linger in the empty grave. Mary, the mother of Jesus, ought to hear these strange tidings; and they went away to tell her.

Now, Mary Magdalene stood without, at the door of the cave, weeping. Like John, she did not venture to go in. She was alone; Peter and John were gone, and the other women were not yet come. The garden was a solitude. Nothing had occurred to deliver her from her agonizing fears. To her it was her Lord, not his body merely, that they had taken away. The hurried departure of Peter and John, and the absence of Salome and Mary Cleophas, must have confirmed her suspicions. She stooped down, as John had done, to look at the place where he had lain. There was the spot where his thorn-crowned head had been pillowed, and his pierced feet had rested. But the grave was no longer empty. At the feet, and the head, where the body of Jesus had lain, sat two angels, bending over the place, as if still watching him, just as she would have sat and watched him if she might but have stayed beside him, even in the sepulchre. The angels neither astonished nor affrighted her; she was too engrossed in her sorrow. "Woman, why weepest thou?" they asked. She answered them without fear—the only human being who has spoken to angels with no tremor—"Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." She even turned away from them, as from those who could give her no comfort, while her Lord was lost. Dimly through her tears she saw some one standing near her, and heard the same question, "Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" These last words gave her the idea that it must be the gardener, who would know all that had taken

place in the garden under his care. "Sir," she cried, "if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, that I may take him away." She had but one thought in her mind: where was her Lord?

"Mary," said the voice behind her—a familiar voice; and she turned quickly, crying gladly, passionately, "Rabboni!" He called her from the abyss of despair to a rapture of joy beyond words. She sprang towards him to touch him, to make sure that it was he himself whom she had seen die upon the cross. In a moment she was back again to the happy hours in Galilee, when she had ministered unto him, before all this agony came. As before, one thought alone possessed her soul. Here was her Master, he who had saved her in the old bad days.

But Christ was not the same. A solemn change had passed over him, which must alter all his relations with his old friends. She was too excited to feel this; but his first words arrested her. "Touch me not," he said; possibly meaning, "Stay not to touch me now, for I am not yet ascending unto my Father; but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; unto my God, and your God." He was their elder brother, who could remain with them but a little while, and then they would see him no more, but he would represent them in the Father's house, where he was going to prepare a place for them. Mary knew she also should see him again; and when he vanished out of her sight, she stayed not a moment longer at the sepulchre, but went to tell them she had seen the Lord.

All these circumstances had followed one another rapidly; and it may be that the women who were to bring the spices and ointments had been delayed, or perhaps had waited some little time for Salome and the two Marys at the appointed place of meeting. Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward, was the chief person among them, as the woman of greatest wealth and rank. They were not at all surprised at finding the stone rolled back from the door of the sepulchre, supposing that it had been done on purpose for them. But they found the body they had come to embalm taken away. This very much perplexed them; though they were not afraid until they saw two men standing by them, in shining garments. So terrified were they, that they bowed their faces to the earth before them. The angels said to them, as if marvelling at these repeated visits to the grave, "Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen; remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, 'The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified,'



THE ENTOMBMENT OF CHRIST.—JOHN 19 : 42.



CHRIST APPEARING TO MARY.

"TOUCH ME NOT; FOR I AM NOT YET ASCENDED TO MY FATHER."—JOHN 20 : 17.

and the third day rise again.' ” Then the women remembered these words, wondering at their own forgetfulness. They returned at once to the city ; and as they were not likely to single out Peter or John, as Mary Magdalene had done, to be the first hearers of their tidings, they went quickly to some common place of meeting among the disciples, and there found a large party assembled, which had been probably called together by Peter, to hear that the body of the Lord was gone no one knew whither. The women told the vision they had seen ; but the disciples could not believe them, and their words seemed as idle tales. Peter, however, hearing of the appearance of angels, arose, and ran again to the sepulchre for the second time ; but stooping down, he saw no such vision, only the linen clothes laid as he had seen them before. He returned to the assembly of the disciples, full of wonder at what had come to pass.

It is natural to suppose that Mary Magdalene, who had hastened to John's house when she knew the grave was open, would also go there after she had seen Christ. Mary, his mother, would thus hear first of the appearance of her Son. Finding there that Peter and John had left to call together the disciples at some appointed place, Mary Magdalene followed them ; and soon after Joanna and the women from Galilee had told of their vision of angels, she entered to relate the appearance of the Lord himself to her in the garden. She had even a message to deliver to them. But the incredulous and bewildered disciples could not believe her, and probably said among themselves that grief had distracted her mind. When Peter returned from the sepulchre, having seen nothing, this conviction would naturally be deepened.

But presently Mary Cleophas and Salome, the aunt of Jesus, and the mother of James and John, women not likely to be deceived, or to mistake a stranger for their Lord, came in with another account of having seen him, and of receiving a message from him for his brethren. But still the incredulous disciples refused to believe. Mary Magdalene owned that she had not touched Jesus, had indeed been forbidden to touch him ; but these two women declared that they had not only met him, but that when they heard his greeting, they had fallen down to worship him, being afraid, and had held him by his feet. “ Be not afraid,” he had said, “ go, tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.”

There was this excuse for the unbelief of the disciples that as yet the only manifestations, either of angels or of the Lord himself, had been to women, who are always more excited, and more open to superstitious fancies, in

hours of sorrow, than men are. The simple facts, as known to the disciples, were, that the sepulchre was open at daybreak, and the body of their Master missing. Who had broken open the grave they could not tell; but their suspicion must have been that some enemy had done it.

The news spread rapidly throughout Jerusalem, and no doubt crowds of curious spectators flocked to the garden to see the open tomb. Amongst them the partisans of the Sanhedrim diligently spread the report that the body was stolen away by the disciples, while the guard slept. It would be no longer prudent for the well-known followers of Jesus to be seen near Calvary and Gethsemane; but those who were less marked among his friends probably mingled with the throng, and from time to time brought tidings to the assembly of disciples of what was going on. The hours wore away, and still they were in perplexity and unbelief. Three women only had seen him; one of these had not touched him, and the other two had been so bewildered and amazed, as to have kept their interview with him to themselves, until after Mary Magdalene had given her account.

CHAPTER X.

Emmaus.

WHEN the disciples were first called together by Peter and John, there were among them two friends, one of whom was named Cleophas, not the husband of Mary, but probably a native of Emmaus, a village about nine miles from the city. They were present when the party of Galilean women, with Joanna, came to tell of seeing two angels in the sepulchre. Possibly they went with Peter, when he ran a second time to the grave; but they did not return with him, as they did not hear the statement of Mary Magdalene, or of Salome and Mary Cleophas. Very likely they lingered about the garden amongst the crowd, listening to the various guesses and rumors concerning the strange event, until it was time to start on their long walk homewards. Calvary lay north or north-east of the city walls, and Emmaus to the east; there was no need therefore for them to return through the busy streets, where they might have heard that their risen Lord had appeared to, not one, but three of the women, who had loved him so faithfully, and ministered to him so long. Sad,

though it was a feast time when joyousness was a duty, these men might well be.

It is a toilsome road, and the afternoon sun beat hot upon them. But they heeded neither the heat of the sun nor the roughness of the road. They were reasoning and pondering over the events that had followed quickly upon one another, since they had entered Jerusalem to eat the feast of the passover. There had been the betrayal, the arrest, the mock trial before the Sanhedrim, the real trial before Pilate, the scourging, the crucifixion, the darkness at noon-day, and earthquake, all hurried one upon another. They might well be sad and downcast as they communed about these things.

Presently a stranger, journeying the same toilsome road, drew near and asked them how it was they could be thus sorrowful during the feast. Cleophas answered him, "Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things that are come to pass there in these days?" All Jerusalem was busy about them, and this stranger, who seemed to be coming from the city, might surely guess what they were talking about. Yet he said, "What things?" And now Cleophas, concluding that he was indeed a stranger, told him of Jesus of Nazareth, the mighty prophet, who had been condemned to death by the Great Sanhedrim, their rulers. "But we trusted," he went on, sorrowfully, "that it had been he that should have redeemed Israel." Then he narrated how certain women had astonished them that morning, who did not find his body in the sepulchre, but came saying they had seen a vision of angels, who said that he was alive. "But him they saw not," added Cleophas to the stranger walking at his side.

"O foolish men!" he answered gently, "and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" They, like all other Jews, were well versed in the writings of Moses and the prophets; but as this stranger explained to them passages perfectly familiar to them, they stood out in a new light, with deeper meaning than any they had had before. Their hearts, slow to believe, burned within them. Was it, then, true that Jesus was that Holy One whose soul should not be left in hell, nor his flesh see corruption? The long road seemed short; the rocky path no longer rugged to their feet; the heat of the sun was unfelt. How fast the time fled! How quickly Emmaus was seen on its hill before them! Who could this stranger be, so wise and gracious, whom they loved already, and could listen to unweariedly, almost as if he were the Lord himself?

They were close to the village now, and he made as though he would have gone farther; but they could not part with him yet, stranger though he was. It was getting on for evening, and the day was far spent. "Abide with us," said both of them; and he went into tarry with them, as they hoped, until the morning. He had charmed away their sadness, and taught them what they had never known before. How gladly would they minister to this new friend! When they sat down to supper they set him in the most honorable place, to preside over their evening meal. He took bread, blessing and breaking it with some words or gesture peculiar to Christ, and gave it to them, as he had been wont to do when he sat at meat with his disciples. Now their eyes were no longer holden that they should not know him. It was he himself; their crucified and risen Lord. For one brief, glad moment they saw his beloved face, and the pierced hands, which had given to them the bread. Then he vanished out of their sight; but this was yet another proof to them that it was indeed the Lord.

At once they rose up to return to Jerusalem, thinking nothing of the long walk and the coming night, when they had such tidings to carry to the disciples, and the mother and kinsmen of Christ. It must have been late when they reached the city, but they found ten of the apostles, with a number of the disciples, gathered together, though with closed doors, and precautions taken, for fear of the Pharisees. Who was there? The women probably, Lazarus from Bethany, Nicodemus, perhaps, and Joseph of Arimathea, whose garden had been trampled by so many feet that day. There was great agitation among them still. Had the body of Jesus been stolen away from the grave? Was it not his spirit only which had been seen by the women? Even Peter, who had also now seen the Lord, the apostle who denied him being the first to whom he revealed himself; Peter could hardly believe that it was his Master, and not a spirit. Yet when the two disciples from Emmaus entered, they were met by the cry, "The Lord has arisen indeed, and appeared unto Simon." But Cleophas and his companion had something more to tell of than a mere brief appearance. They described the stranger joining them, and walking mile after mile with them, conversing all the while familiarly; how he went into tarry with them, and sat down to meat, and was known to them in the breaking of bread. This the disciples could not believe. Cleophas and his friend do not seem to have been very renowned followers of Jesus, and the other disciples were hard of belief. Those among them who had seen him had caught but brief glimpses of him. Mary Magdalene had not been allowed

to touch him; Salome and his aunt Mary had only held his feet; to Peter he had appeared certainly, but not in this homely manner as a fellow-traveller along the same rough way.

They were still speaking incredulously about these new tidings, when suddenly, with no opening of the fastened doors, and no sound of entering, they saw Jesus himself standing in the midst of them, and heard his voice, saying, "Peace be unto you." But they were terrified and affrighted, supposing that they saw a spirit. There was none bold enough to try to touch him, and no one dared to speak. With great gentleness and tenderness he reproached them. "Behold my hands and my feet," he said, showing them the print of the nails; "handle me, and see. It is I myself. A spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." Their terror and trouble were pacified, but still they were not calm enough for faith. They could not now believe for joy. But to give them time to collect themselves, he asked for food, as once before he had commanded something to eat to be given to the ruler's little daughter, when he called her back from the grave. He ate before them, a convincing proof that he was no spirit; and then he was seen no more by them. But there was no room for unbelief among them now. The load upon their hearts, like the great stone of the sepulchre, was rolled away forever. Their Lord was arisen indeed.



CHAPTER XI.

It is the Lord.

THOUGH the chief priests and Pharisees carefully reported that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus of Nazareth, they took no steps to prove the fact, or to punish the violators of the grave. The whole number of the disciples remained in Jerusalem during the feast, and the Sabbath following the feast. Even on the first day of the week after it, when the bulk of the Galileans had started homewards, the eleven apostles still lingered in the city. Thomas, who had vehemently refused to believe in the resurrection of his Master because he had not seen him, had passed the week in alternate mourning and disputing with those who vainly sought to convince him. He saw Mary, the mother of Christ, comforted, and full of gladness; his fellow-disciples rejoicing and exultant; yet to all they urged he answered, "Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put

my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." It was a miserable week for him, for he was deeply attached to his crucified Master, and timid and despondent as he was, he had once said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." But he could not be persuaded that he had risen from the dead.

Eight days had passed since Jesus had been seen; and the eleven apostles were sitting together, the doors being shut for fear of the Pharisees, as on the week before, when once more he stood in their midst, with no sign or sound of coming, and said, "Peace be unto you." Then turning to Thomas, and speaking directly to him, he added, "Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side, and be not faithless, but believing." But he did not now need the evidence he had demanded; it was enough to see his Master, and hear him speak. Jesus wished to prove to him he was the very Son of man, who had died upon the cross. Thomas cried, "My Lord and my God!"

The apostles no longer lingered in Jerusalem. They were needed in their homes in Galilee, and it was safer for them to assemble together there, where the chief priests had less power than in Judæa. Moreover, there would be many arrangements to make for their families, before they could set out on those missionary journeys which soon scattered them into far countries. They scarcely yet knew what their Lord would have them to do, but for a short time longer they were sent to dwell in their own homes, among their own people, following their old trades amid familiar scenes.

Seven of them were dwelling near Capernaum, on the shores of the lake, where they had earned their livelihood by fishing. Peter said to his comrades, one evening after their return from Jerusalem, "I go a fishing." Thomas and Nathanael, James and John, with two others, joined him, and, entering into a boat, launched out upon the dark waters, and toiled all night, but came back to the land with empty nets. In the cold gray of the morning they were going ashore, disappointed and hungry men, when they saw on the dim beach a man standing to watch them. It was still too dark for them to see clearly. "Children, have ye any meat?" his voice called across the water. There is nothing unusual in such a question from a bystander, who has been looking on while men are fishing. "No," they shouted back; for they were still some distance from the land. "Cast the net on the right side of the boat, and ye shall find," was the advice given. He might see signs of fish which had escaped them; and they obeyed, feel-

ing that though their toil had been in vain all night, one chance cast of the net might atone for their want of success. If not, they could but return empty, as they were now doing.

While they cast their net the light grew stronger, and the morning shone upon the lake and shore, upon the disciples in their boat, and the solitary stranger looking on. But soon the net was so full of fish, that they could not draw it; and quickly there flashed through the mind of John the memory of that morning, when Jesus had called them to leave their nets, and follow him. "It is the Lord," he said to Peter. There he stood in the morning light at the edge of the waters where they were fishing. Possibly, nay probably, there was already shining about him a transfiguring glory, such as they had witnessed on the mountain, when his face was as the sun, and his raiment as white as the glistening snow. Peter at once threw himself into the lake, that he might the sooner reach the Master he had once denied; and the rest followed in their boat, dragging their net with them.

Just such a reception met them as may have welcomed them often in the old days, when, though disciples, they still had to earn their bread. No doubt their Lord had often ministered to them before he washed their feet at the Last Supper. There was a fire already kindled on the beach, lit for them whilst they were toiling, hungry and weary, in the darkness; and fish was broiling on it, and cakes of bread were baking in the hot ashes. It was a homely, simple welcome, such as one of themselves might have prepared for his comrades. They and their Master had often eaten their meals together thus in the open air, beside a little fire on the ground. "Bring of the fish which ye have now caught," said Jesus to them; and Peter ran and drew the net to land, counting the fish as he took them out of the unbroken meshes. Presently Jesus said to them, "Come and dine." But none of them durst say, "Who art thou?" They were silent in happy awe.

The meal was ready, and they hungry with their night's toil. They were at home on the shores of their own lake. Every hill, every village, every landmark about them, lying clear in the early light, was as familiar to them as the faces of old friends. The freshness of the morning air brought to them the scent of flowers such as they had plucked when children. The little waves of the lake rippled up against the margin, chiming as it had done to them when they were boys. The larks sang overhead, and the waterfowl cried across the water. How different was this from that upper chamber in Jerusalem, when their Master's soul was troubled, and exceed-

ingly sorrowful, as he said there was a traitor among them. There was no traitor now, no agony in Gethsemane, no cruel foes, no cross. All these were forever past.

Once again Jesus took bread, and, breaking it, he gave it to them. In silence, blissful, yet reverent, they took their food from his hand, and satisfied their hunger. They knew that it was the Lord, and that was enough. When the meal was over, three times Christ asked of Peter the question, "Lovest thou me?" until at the third time Peter was aggrieved. "Lord," he cried, "thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee." Jesus bade him feed his lambs and his sheep; and signified to him what death he should die for his sake. By this time the morning had advanced, and the people were waking up to their day's work in the fields, or upon the lake, and Jesus withdrew from his disciples, saying to Peter, "Follow me." All of them were about to enter upon the life he had quitted; they would be persecuted, cast out of the synagogue, and put to death as he had been. The servant could not be above his master, nor the disciple above his Lord. They must all, even Peter, who had denied him, follow him through shame and suffering to a bitter end. Peter understood Christ's words literally, and rose up to follow him; John also could not stay behind if he might but be with his Lord in that mysterious solitude whither he was about to vanish, and whence he came so suddenly among them. But here they could not follow him. Peter asked a question as to what John should do in the perilous future they were about to enter; but Jesus checked his curiosity by a vague, indefinite answer before passing out of their sight. This was the third time that Jesus showed himself to his disciples after he was risen from the dead.

CHAPTER XII.

His Friends.

TWICE had the Lord been seen by the women who ministered unto him; three times by the apostles. But a still larger assembly were to have proof that he had indeed risen from the dead. Whilst Jesus was yet in Galilee, before his crucifixion, he had told not only his twelve apostles, but the mass of his disciples, that he should be crucified, and rise again on the third day. He had also fixed upon a mountain where he would



ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

"WHILE HE BLESSED THEM, HE WAS PARTED FROM THEM, AND CARRIED UP INTO HEAVEN."—LUKE 24 : 51.



"WHERE TWO OR THREE ARE GATHERED TOGETHER IN MY NAME, THERE AM I IN THE MIDST OF THEM."—MATT. 18 : 20.

appear unto them after this resurrection, probably a mountain in some central point, where all could assemble to meet him. More than five hundred disciples flocked to this appointed place, men and women, those whom he had delivered from blindness, sickness, sorrow, even from evil spirits. None would be absent who could possibly reach the quiet mountain, where their crucified Lord would meet them in his own person; no spirit; no illusion. A few even yet doubted; but the rest worshipped him. Speaking to them all, not to the apostles merely, he bade them teach all nations to observe whatsoever he had commanded. Each disciple was to be a messenger of the good tidings for him; though only a chosen few were to forsake all to become his ambassadors to distant lands.

There was one of the Lord's disciples, who had been his companion, not for a few months only, nor for two or three years, but during his whole life. They had been boys together, dwelt in the same village, climbed the hills side by side, learned from the same schoolmaster, gone together to the synagogue Sabbath after Sabbath; perhaps worked at the same carpenter's bench. This was James, the son of his aunt, Mary Cleophas, of whom tradition says he closely resembled the Lord in his personal appearance. Jesus appeared alone to him, in some quiet, unknown hour, which would have remained a secret from us if James had not himself told it to Paul some years afterwards. Jesus had not ceased to love those whom he had loved in his early life; and it may be he appeared to James to satisfy some passionate yearning of his cousin's heart, for one more hour of such communion as those they had had together on the hills round Nazareth.

For forty days after his resurrection Christ remained upon earth, showing himself alive by many infallible proofs, eating and drinking with his disciples; being seen of them, and touched by them; teaching them, and speaking to them things pertaining to the kingdom of God, which they were to preach. He had said, "I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice: and your joy no man taketh from you." His words were fulfilled. The joy of his resurrection had made them strong to face the perils they had once dreaded; and by many a proof he made this joy unspeakable, and full of glory. No king, no high-priest, no emperor, not all the powers and principalities of the whole world, could take this joy from them. Now the time was come when Christ could trust his message with them, and leave them to go to the Father.

The mission of the apostles was to begin at Jerusalem—the city of his crucifixion. There, some days before the feast of Pentecost, they were once

more gathered together, with Mary, the mother of Jesus, and other women, and his kinsmen, waiting for his last revelation of himself. Jesus came to them and led them out as far as Bethany, on the Mount of Olives; but whether all were there, or his apostles only, we cannot tell. Seen and heard by them, but invisible to eyes that had no love for him, he passed along that road, down which the thronging multitudes had swept in glad procession, waving palm branches, and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David!" Once more he looked upon the doomed city, over which he had wept, and which was now crowned by its blackest sin. "Begin at Jerusalem," he said. Even yet the apostles did not fully understand him. "Lord," they asked, "wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" They beheld their beautiful city, with its magnificent temple and gorgeous palaces, and still thought it, blood-stained as it was, a fitting throne for their risen Lord. Again, as once before, he told them they were not to know the times and seasons which the Father had kept in his own power.

Past the home at Bethany, which he had loved so much, and blessed so wondrously, Jesus led his disciples to some solitary spot on the mountain, where Jerusalem, the guilty city, with Calvary at her gates, was hidden from their view. Lifting up his pierced hands, he blessed them, his friends who had been with him in his tribulation; but whilst he was yet speaking a cloud came down to overshadow them, as they had been overshadowed in the Mount of Transfiguration. Their loving hands could clasp him no longer; they could hear him no more, but falling down, they worshipped him, as he was thus carried away from them. Even when all was lost to their sight, that bright chariot of cloud in which he was ascending on high amidst thousands of angels, and leading captivity captive, when that had faded in the deep blue of the heavens, they stood gazing steadfastly toward the point where it had vanished, until two men in white apparel spoke to them, saying, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come again in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."

In great joy they returned to Jerusalem, along the well-known road, with Gethsemane not far off, and Calvary in sight. With one accord they, with the women, and Mary, and all the kinsmen of the Lord, continued together in prayer and supplication, going up constantly to the temple to praise and bless God.

CHAPTER XIII.

His Foes.

BUT what of the enemies of Christ? the traitor, the priestly persecutors, the unjust judge, the cowardly tetrarch, nay the city itself, which could suffer such crimes? A few years after the crucifixion, Herod Antipas, the murderer of John the Baptist, was goaded on by Herodias to solicit the rank and title of king from the Roman emperor. Her brother, Herod Agrippa, had been made king of those provinces which had been governed by Philip the tetrarch; and he arrived in Palestine, A. D. 38. His kingly state excited the ambition and jealousy of Herodias, who at last succeeded in carrying Herod Antipas to Rome to supplant Agrippa in the favor of the emperor. But Agrippa's influence proved stronger than theirs; and instead of being allowed to return to Palestine, Herod Antipas was banished, and from that time till his death dragged out the life of an exile in Gaul and Spain. Herodias did not forsake him; the only good thing we know of that wicked woman.

Pilate had sacrificed Christ to his fears of being misrepresented to the emperor. The very fate he dreaded befell him; for riots becoming more and more frequent under his rule, both in Judæa and Samaria, his superior, the prefect of Syria, sent him to Rome for trial. He arrived there just after the death of Tiberius, who had been his friend and patron; and Caligula, his successor, banished him also to Gaul, where, it is said, he died by his own hand, unable to bear his disgrace and exile.

After the departure of Pilate, the prefect of Syria visited Jerusalem, and removed Caiaphas from his office as high-priest. But a son of Annas was put in his place, and the chief power of the priesthood remained in the family for a long period. Annas himself died in extreme old age, and was considered by his countrymen one of the happiest men of his time and nation.

or a brief space under Herod Agrippa, who was made king of Judæa and Samaria, as well as of the provinces east of the Jordan, Jerusalem enjoyed prosperity, whilst the early Christians suffered many persecutions, Herod putting James, the brother of John, to death, to please the Jews. But immediately after this, upon the death of Herod, A. D. 45, a severe famine, lasting two years, befell Judæa. Soon afterwards, at the feast of the passover, many thousands of the people perished in a tumult caused by

the intrusion of the Roman soldiers into the temple. A set of fanatics and assassins began to infest Jerusalem and its neighborhood, some of whom slew the high-priest, a son of Annas, whilst sacrificing. Riots and massacres became more and more common. False Messiahs sprang up. Rival high-priests headed different parties, each bent upon plunder. At last the Jews broke out into open insurrection against the Roman power; but they were also divided among themselves, and separated into many factions, at deadly enmity with one another. The Roman army besieged Jerusalem, A. D. 70, when it was crowded with strangers and pilgrims come up to keep the pass-over. Thousands perished in battle, thousands more by famine and murder within the walls, and when the city was taken, the old and sickly were massacred, children under seventeen years of age were sold into slavery, and the rest were sent in multitudes to make up gladiatorial shows in the amphitheatres of Rome and the provinces. "The whole of the city was so thoroughly levelled and dug up, that no one visiting it would believe it had ever been inhabited." It is said that not one of the Christians perished in the siege, as they fled from the doomed city before it was surrounded by the Roman army.

But a far swifter and more direct destruction befell the man, who knew, and knew distinctly, what he was doing when he betrayed his Lord into the hands of his enemies. Judas was not ignorant of the purposes of the Sanhedrim; he was no stranger to Jesus. He had even been one of his familiar friends, in whom he trusted. He had been an eye-witness, like the other apostles, of the wondrous life of Jesus from the beginning. He had himself preached the gospel, and done works of mercy in the name of his Master. Yet he clearly understood that the bribe for which he bargained to betray him was but the price of his blood. For he had been with Christ when he was hiding from his enemies, who sought to kill him by any means, by private assassination, or by sudden tumult. To sell Jesus to the chief priests, he knew, was to betray innocent blood.

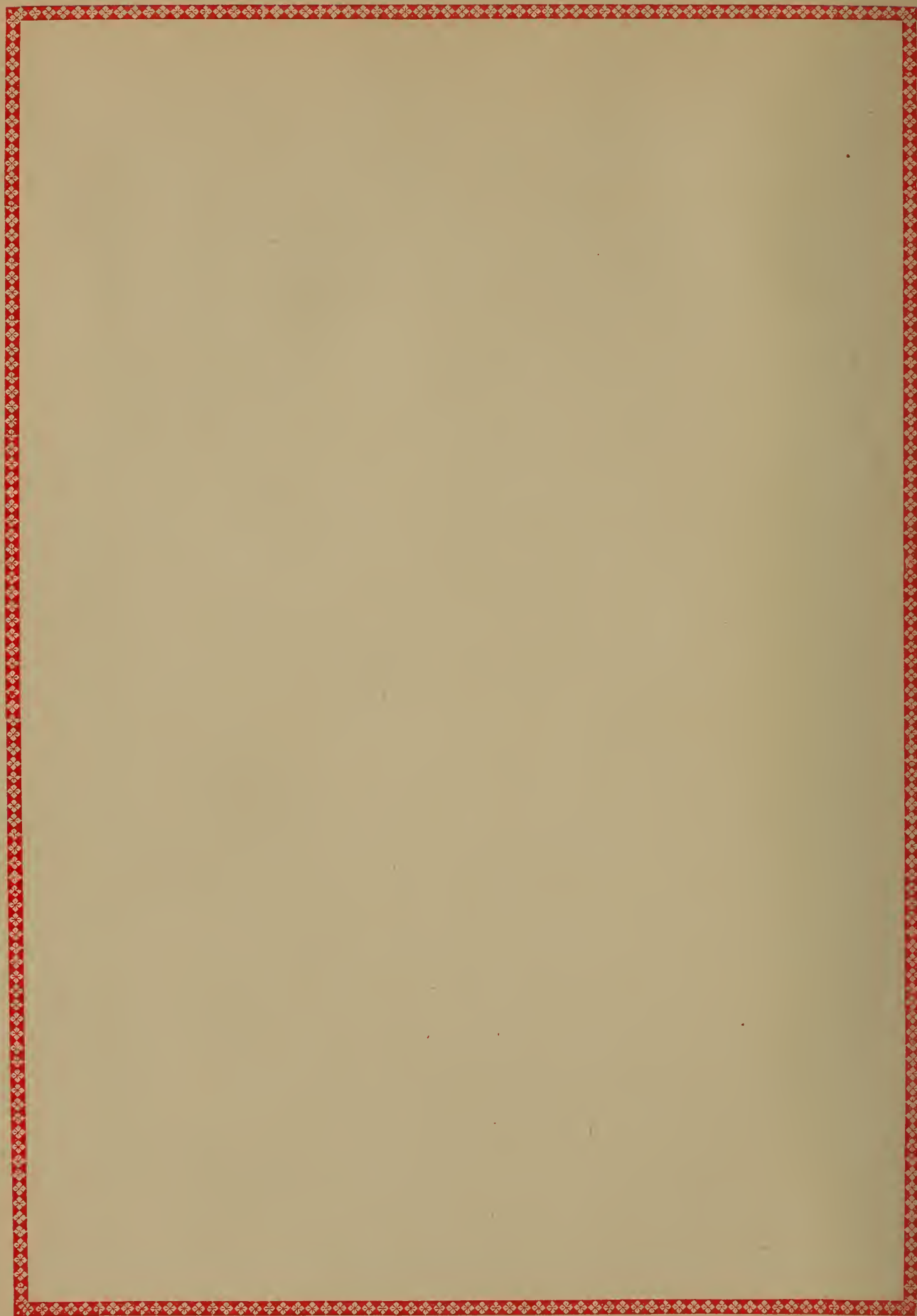
We are led to suppose that Judas accompanied the band which carried Jesus from Gethsemane to the palace of the high-priest, a dark-spirited, anxious, skulking villain, already hearing a low whisper of that storm of remorse which was soon to drive him to despair. The wages of his sin were promptly paid to him; yet still he seems to have lingered about the spot where his Master was, watching how things went on. It was night, and he was friendless. All his old comrades would now turn from him in terror. He was not a stupid man; he could feel keenly. There was but one spark

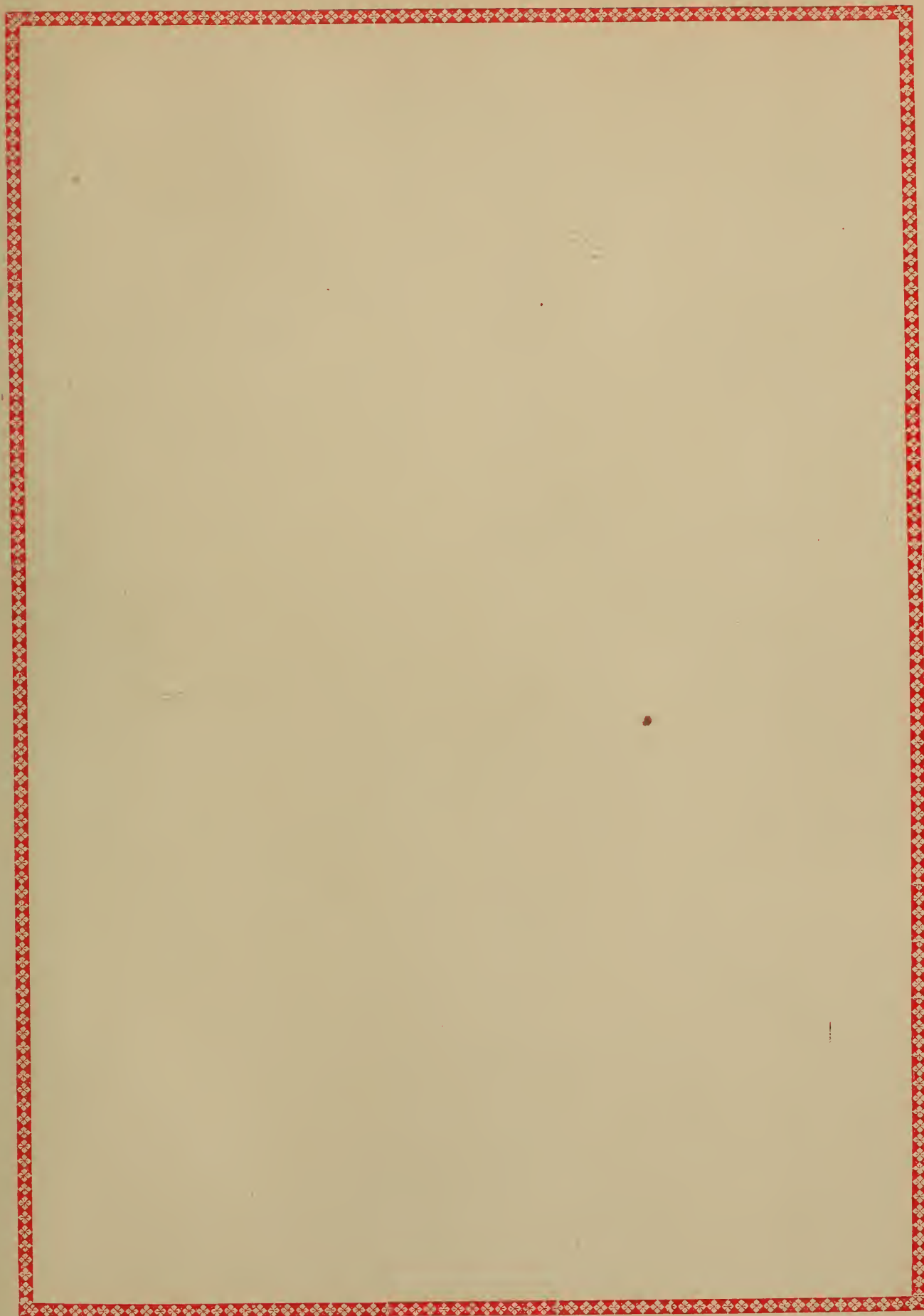
of comfort—his purse was no longer empty, and the little field he coveted could now be his. As soon as the day dawned he would go and see about it.

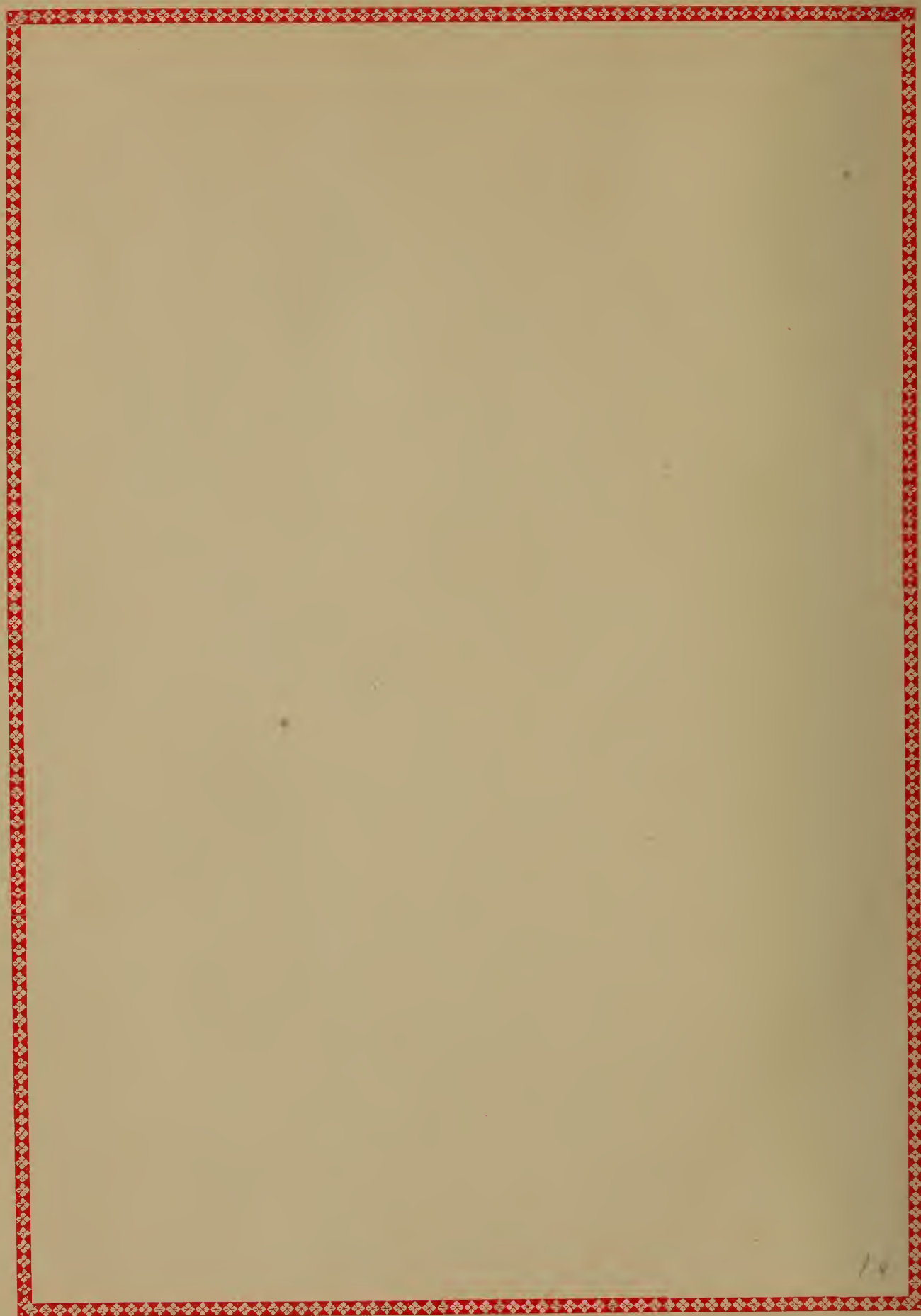
Possibly there was a faint, lingering hope that Jesus might deliver himself. Once before he had passed invisibly through the midst of his foes, when they took up stones to kill him. Perhaps he had heard Jesus say to Peter, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?" But the faint hope died away as the cruel hours sped on; and when Jesus suffered them to lead him away, bound, before Pilate, Judas knew he would not save himself. He ought to have known it before. A fierce passion of remorse seized upon him. Wildly he fled to the temple, where the priests, his tempters, were already preparing to celebrate their solemn day of peace-offering for the nation. He forced his way into the inner portions of the sacred place, probably into the hall of the Sanhedrim, where the priests assembled early every morning to cast lots for the services of the day. He flung down the thirty pieces of silver, crying, "I have sinned, in that I have betrayed the innocent blood!" The priests heard, and answered him with a sneer. "What is that to us?" they asked; "see thou to that!" Judas left the money, the price of his Lord, and departed forever from the temple.

It may be he lingered through the terrible morning of the crucifixion, until after the awful crime in which he had had a chief share was completed. Then, seeking out the field he had coveted, and which was all but purchased, he put an end to his miserable life. Not without warning had this bitter end come, a merciful warning from his Lord, who had said, whilst there was yet time for him to repent, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but wo unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born."



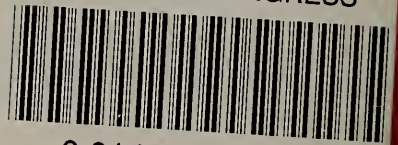






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